

SC447645

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2018. She is suitably qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 February 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2018	Full	Good
22/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/12/2016	Full	Good
05/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	30/04/2019
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))	30/04/2019

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive excellent care from staff who are passionate about them and are committed to understanding their individual needs. As a result, children make significant progress from their starting points. Some children have experienced multiple placement moves in their early lives, and this is their first experience of stability.

Children enjoy living in a well-maintained, comfortable and homely environment. Children's photographs and artwork are displayed throughout the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised and are maintained to a high standard.

Staff support children's emotional development by promoting care based on a secure attachment model. Routines in the home are led by children's need for attention at specific times. For example, when the children return from school, the staff ensure that their complete focus is on the children. Consequently, children feel valued and make progress.

Staff provide children with the opportunity to create new memories and to have happy experiences, such as holidays and fun activities. As a result, children start to move forward with their lives. Staff ensure that important memories are captured and provide children with albums of photographs of their time living in the home.

Children learn the skills that they require to become independent. They take responsibility for tasks around the house. As they become older, they learn to budget, shop and cook. They learn to take responsibility for both their own care and well-being and those of others.

Internal care planning processes are flexible and centre around each child's identified needs. Staff deliver bespoke care packages. These reflect the longer-term objectives of the local authority care plan and the smaller individual wishes held by each child. Children's voices are evident in some aspects of the running of this home. However, this could be further enhanced so that children receive consistent feedback when they make requests or suggestions. This approach would enable children to have a greater involvement in decisions about their care.

Promoting education is central to the daily routines in the home. The registered manager advocates for children to have access to high-quality teaching and learning. Consequently, all children have suitable education placements and make progress. Staff encourage children to be ambitious by helping them to understand that they can achieve their dreams and aspirations. A college tutor told the inspector, 'We have seen such a positive change in [Name of child]'s motivation this year. She has matured and is determined to do well and get her qualifications.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff understand risk exceptionally well and they keep detailed and accurate records about safeguarding issues. Detailed risk assessments identify specific actions for staff to take to manage and reduce children's risk-taking behaviour. Staff follow the guidance set out in these documents rigorously. They are highly vigilant and work hard to ensure children's safety.

Children rarely go missing from this home. Staff work closely with local police services, the placing authority and other professionals to identify any potential risks for children, and ways to minimise these. Children's individual risk assessments take account of their specific circumstances and vulnerabilities and highlight any increased potential for children to be at risk of exploitation. One child has been supported to undertake and complete a programme of work to assist in her understanding of child sexual exploitation.

All staff complete training in the use of physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. They only use physical restraint as a measure of control to prevent children from hurting themselves or others. Records of these incidents are extremely detailed and reflective. The registered manager takes responsibility for monitoring all incidents of restraints. She analyses the records to identify any patterns or trends that may indicate a change in children's emotional stability, anxieties or frustrations.

Children's behaviours are sometimes extremely complex and challenging. Staff make sure that behaviour plans provide a balance of incentives and rewards. These plans encourage children to practise their developing skills, to take control of their actions and to take responsibility for their behaviours. Staff promote restorative approaches and encourage children to make amends for their behaviours.

On one occasion, managers did not consider children's needs sufficiently when a child who had been recently admitted to the home displayed extreme behaviours. As a result, incidents occurred which resulted in children feeling that they were at potential risk for a short period of time. Additional staffing was put in place. However, this measure was in response to incidents that had already occurred. Managers and staff have reflected on this shortfall and have learned from the incidents. They have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that this is not repeated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is passionate and inspirational. She is supported by a deputy manager who shares these attributes. Together, they evaluate the quality of care provided to ensure that every child is making progress and that the care provided makes a positive difference to their lives. Their enthusiasm influences the staff, who share their passion and drive for achieving the best possible outcomes for children.

The registered manager's monitoring of the home is an important strength.

She has a good insight into the home's strengths and areas of development. She is proactive in addressing shortfalls. The statement of purpose accurately reflects the services offered by the home and is clear about the support offered to children.

Staff are positive about the support that they receive from the registered manager. Supervision sessions are regular and of high quality. They help staff to generate ideas and reflect on their practice. New staff are robustly vetted and are supported through a clear, effective induction process. Staff are also provided with a wide range of training that informs their practice. However, the home has experienced a period of instability due to staff turnover. This is because the registered manager has high expectations of her staff. This short period of instability had an impact on the care provided to children, and on one occasion a child expressed that she did not feel safe. The management team acted to address this and minimise the impact on children. New staff have now been appointed, and they have demonstrated that they can meet the needs of the children. However, not all are experienced or suitably qualified yet.

Managers develop good relationships with other professionals. This close partnership working ensures that children make and sustain progress. A social worker told the inspector, 'The manager is really on the ball. She has been really proactive and gets things sorted.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC447645

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services

Registered provider address: Unity Residential Care Services Ltd, 98 Lancaster Road, Newcastle under Lyme ST5 1DS

Responsible individual: Hilary Jones

Registered manager: Emma Shea

Inspector

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector
Patrick McIntosh, social care inspector

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