

SC447645

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately operated and provides care for up to four children who have experienced childhood instability that has resulted in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The manager is registered and appropriately qualified and experienced.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 January 2023

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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Full	Good
10/01/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive high-quality individualised care that promotes their safety and outcomes. The staff understand the children and their needs. Children have positive relationships with the staff, which have strengthened more over time. Children can approach staff when they have any concerns.

Children are making good progress in their education from their starting points. Effective communication between the staff and education settings provides consistent support for children. Children who previously struggled with school attendance are achieving and working towards GCSEs. All children are in education full time, and one child's attendance has increased from 4% to 94%.

Children's health needs are well met by staff, who ensure that children attend required health appointments. There are plans in place to support children's emotional well-being, and one child is scheduled to start life-story work with a trusted professional. This process will help the child to explore and understand their early childhood experiences.

The staff support children to build and maintain relationships with their families and friends. Children's views about how often they see these important people in their lives are listened to and acted on. Family members feel supported by staff at the home and believe that their children are happy and safe. One parent said, 'I am so chuffed with how much they've improved at school, and they've really connected with the carers.'

The staff spend time with children and discuss their progress with them regularly. This helps children to understand their journey and experiences and to plan how the staff can support them with their future goals. Children are consulted on developments in the home and are central to the staff team's practice.

Children participate in positive life experiences, such as holidays and the police cadets. These experiences mean that children's self-confidence is growing as they are challenged in safe social groups.

Staff are supporting older children to develop their independent living skills. This development is at the early stages and requires further support from external professionals to ensure that children receive the required support as they move on from the home.

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

Effective multi-agency working means that risks to children are well managed and reducing. The staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. Detailed risk assessments and individual support plans are in

place, which ensures that staff are aware of each child's individual risks and needs. Managers' monitoring of risks through effective chronologies means that these records and plans are relevant and up to date.

After a period where children were going missing, the home has been proactive, alongside other agencies, in finding solutions to managing missing-from-home incidents. Children now maintain contact with the staff while away from the home and are following their plans for free time. This change in behaviour is positive and means that children are also keeping themselves safe.

Direct work is used effectively to help children to understand how to improve their behaviour after incidents occur. These sessions are well planned, individual to each child and monitored by key workers to track the progress each child is making.

The registered manager ensures that safeguarding procedures are followed when children make allegations. Her approach is thorough and impartial, which makes children feel listened to and safe. All parties are communicated with effectively and the outcome is relayed to the child sensitively. Subsequent direct work is carried out to ensure that children learn from these scenarios.

Effective safer recruitment processes are followed, which ensures that children are cared for by safe and trusted adults.

Clear boundaries are in place for children. The staff use restorative practices to minimise the use of negative consequences in the home. Physical intervention is rarely required to manage children's behaviour. There has been one instance where the police were called to the home, which resulted in one child being charged. Although this behaviour has not been repeated by the child, it is not a positive outcome that they have been criminalised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is enthusiastic about her work, and she has developed a culture of high expectations and standards of care for children. Her commitment and drive have been instrumental in the progress that children have made.

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home, which is focused on children exceeding their expected outcomes. Central to this is the development of staff so that they can drive forward the children's progress and outcomes. Staff carry out high-quality training that enables them to meet children's needs. Staff receive regular practice-related supervision in which they are encouraged to reflect on their performance. A wide variety of resources, as well as workshops based on research and therapeutic theory, are used by the registered manager to improve staff practice.

The registered manager is supported by a deputy manager and two trainee registered managers. This strong leadership team has excellent oversight of all aspects of each child's life.

Children are engaged with reviewing their own progress, and the registered manager ensures that their views are used to inform regular updates to their plans. This contributes to children's plans being individualised and dynamic for each child.

Staff feel very well supported in their roles and describe the registered manager as a role model. One staff member said about the registered manager:

'If it had not been for [name of registered manager], I believe I may have taken a different path in my career. She rebuilt my resilience, supported me to build my confidence back up and took me under her wing, sharing her wealth of knowledge and skills.'

The registered manager is visible and approachable for all children and staff. Because of this, morale is extremely high, which allows the staff to develop creative plans to improve the outcomes for children.

Partnership work with external agencies is very positive. During the inspection, professionals complimented the registered manager on her excellent communication and the quality of care provided. An education professional stated that two of the children living at the home would not be where they are today without the registered manager's drive and tenacity.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 Limited

Registered provider address: Unity Residential Care Services Limited, 2 Lymeale Court, Lyme Drive, Parklands, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6NW

Responsible individual: Kirsty Bassett

Registered manager: Helen Thay

Inspector

Mark Dickinson, Social Care Inspector

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