

1027158

Registered provider: Unique Care Homes Support Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to six children aged between 8 and 17 with complex needs who require specialist support. Six children were living at the home at the time of inspection.

The registered manager left in December 2024. An interim manager has been managing the home since then. They have not submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2023	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2023	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Six children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. Five children spoke with the inspector.

Since the last inspection, three children have moved out of the home and two have moved in. Before children move in, managers consider the mix of children and the views of children who already live in the home. This approach has helped children to settle in and build positive peer relationships. Two children who moved out were supported to do so positively. One child had an unplanned ending that was supported by their social worker. The child moved to accommodation that better suited their needs after a decline in their emotional well-being.

Relationship building is prioritised, and staff adopt a child-centred approach. Children speak positively about staff, each other and the home. They say that they feel happy and well cared for. Observations of interactions between the children and staff demonstrate warm, trusting relationships. One child said, 'All the staff are kind to us and say they are here for us and if we need to speak to them, they listen.' Trusting relationships have helped children to make significant progress from their starting points.

Children are in full-time education and their attendance is good. Staff work well with educational professionals to support children's learning. As a result, children have been supported to sit their exams, and make evident progress with their learning.

Children have taken part in a range of fun experiences, including sea cadets, charity bike riding, swimming and short breaks at a forest activity centre. Children's experiences are thoughtfully captured in photos and recorded in memory books. These experiences support children to share experiences with others and enjoy life.

Staff encourage children to develop independence skills. Children are supported to prepare meals, complete chores, self-administer medication and manage money. This helps support children to prepare for their futures.

Staff support children to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Managers and staff have advocated on behalf of children for increases in the time spent with family. This has helped children to feel secure, and connected to people who are important to them.

The home is warmly decorated. Photos of the children and staff are displayed on feature walls. Children personalise their bedrooms, and these are reflective of each of their personalities and tastes.

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

Staff use physical intervention at times to keep children and themselves safe. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and use it as a last resort. After physical interventions, staff offer children medical attention and check on their emotional well-being. Managers review each incident record and talk to children and staff about what happened. Learning from these conversations is shared and used to inform children's plans.

When children have struggled with their emotional well-being, staff have taken effective action. External agencies and professionals have been consulted with. Managers have asked for additional advice from the organisation's specialist advisers to inform safety plans. Staff have put their advice into practice to ensure children have been supported holistically. This approach has helped children to be kept safe.

There have been some incidents where children have gone missing from the home. The staff have responded appropriately. Staff try to locate the children, working with their families and other professionals. When children return, they are warmly welcomed home. If there are concerns about risks, staff respond well. This includes effective communication with other professionals to consider how to support children to reduce the risks they face.

Staff work with children to help them have a better understanding of their own vulnerabilities and how to manage them. Staff support children with well-thought-out key-work sessions. This approach ensures children are supported to understand the challenges they face and supported to learn how to manage them.

Children understand how to raise concerns and complaints. When children have raised concerns, managers have responded effectively. Feedback from the local authority designated officer (LADO) details good levels of communication from managers. However, two allegations were not reported by the staff for five days after they had been made by children. This resulted in a delay in managers being able to take effective action. Advice given by the LADO has been followed by managers and detailed internal investigations regarding staff practice have taken place. However, on two occasions, these investigations were significantly delayed in reaching a conclusion. Delays in sharing information and concluding investigations leave the potential for children to be at risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left the home in December 2024. The registered manager worked alongside the interim manager before leaving the home and has remained within the organisation. This enabled a sufficient handover of the management arrangements. The interim manager has not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

The interim manager has worked in the home for several years and knows the service and children well. He is supported by an experienced deputy manager. Staff speak highly of the manager, saying that he leads by example and is approachable.

The manager feels supported by the responsible individual and colleagues. The manager is ambitious for the home and its development. The manager has effective oversight of records. External and internal monitoring are assessed by the manager to implement improvements.

The manager and staff form a long-standing team. This has ensured that children have been provided with continuity to their care and have built trusting relationships.

Staff receive regular supervision and team meetings. These are detailed and explore topics relevant to the children. During team meetings, staff benefit from workshops that focus on therapeutic approaches. This has provided learning opportunities for staff to develop their practice.

Professionals and parents involved with the home provide positive feedback about the manager and staff. One professional said, 'This really is one of the best residential placements I've worked with. I think it is amazing and really child focussed. The home is great at communicating any worries, incidents or positive feedback.' This reflects the good communication the home has built with external agencies and parents.

The majority of staff are qualified for their role or are working towards the relevant qualification. Staff have access to a range of training opportunities and have completed the service's mandatory training.

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, The 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 understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff report safeguarding concerns to managers and that safeguarding investigations are concluded without delay.	17 March 2025

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: 1027158

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unique Care Homes Support Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Katie Harrison

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector

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