

1249326

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home, which provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The experienced manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025. They hold a qualification in level 9 SVQ in social services (children and young people) SCQF.

At the time of the inspection, there were four children living at the home. All the children spent time with and spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 May 2026

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

Date of last inspection: 2 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/07/2025	Full	Good
08/10/2024	Full	Good
18/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

Children benefit from stable and well-planned care, with positive support during moves. On one occasion, a pre-admission assessment lacked professional curiosity. Most children make good educational progress through strong school communication and individualised support, with achievements celebrated. Health needs are met, and activities promote wellbeing. Staff support children's identity, relationships and independence. Safeguarding is effective. Consistent routines help to develop positive behaviours and reduce risk. Managers support staff and children to reflect following incidents. Leadership is strong, and promotes a child-centred culture, strong staff support, effective partnership working, and continuous improvement within a warm, nurturing environment.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from stable care. Two children experienced carefully planned moves into the home. Staff ensured that each child felt welcome and supported their settling-in process. However, the assessment for one child did not fully identify all needs prior to moving in. This practice has the potential to impact placement stability. One child also experienced a planned move from the home. Managers and staff ensured the move was well organised and that the child was prepared, which supported them to feel confident and settled.

Most children make progress in their education. Staff established good communication with teachers. Children's learning experiences are understood and children receive individualised support to enable them to reach their educational potential. When there are barriers to a child's learning, the manager works well with professionals to ensure that the child's plan considers their views. Managers and staff attend meetings at school and college, where children's progress is discussed and work showcased. Managers and staff celebrate children's academic achievements. For example, one child is preparing for their prom.

Staff ensure that children are registered with local health services and have access to both routine and unplanned health appointments. They also support children to access specialist services when this is needed. Staff arrange activities that promote regular exercise. Staff prepare nutritious meals to support children's health and weight and to help children develop good eating habits.

Staff encourage children to participate in activities they enjoy. One child, who likes dogs, took part in a Husky ride experience. Another child attended their first concert to see a favourite hip-hop artist. These experiences support emotional wellbeing and promote positive life choices.

The manager ensures that children maintain contact with important people, supporting their sense of identity and belonging. Staff also promote cultural awareness by researching and celebrating children's heritage. In addition, they raise awareness of social issues, including mental health and LGBTQ+ topics. Staff present information to children in an engaging and accessible way that promotes inclusion.

Staff provide opportunities for children to develop independence skills at a pace that suits them. Children are encouraged to keep their bedrooms tidy and contribute to household tasks. One child who is preparing for semi-independence manages a weekly budget, purchases food and cooks meals daily. These experiences help children to prepare for their future.

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

Staff provide clear, consistent routines that help children feel safe, secure and supported. Staff's nurturing approach helps to form positive relationships and reduces children's anxieties. When incidents occur, staff use effective strategies to manage situations calmly and safely. On some occasions, and as a last resort, staff hold children to prevent harm to themselves or others. The manager and responsible individual ensure that all incidents of physical restraint are reviewed and evaluated. This process includes discussions with the child and staff. Reviews identify learning, support reflective practice and inform future care arrangements to improve outcomes.

Children benefit from consistent care. One child attributed positive relationships with staff to making safer decisions and no longer going missing from home. Staff respond appropriately when children's whereabouts are not known and children are welcomed home. The manager identified communication barriers between police forces that can delay responses and appropriately escalated this concern to a Member of Parliament. A proactive and nurturing approach to keep children safe means children no longer go missing.

Staff use research to inform important discussions with children, helping them develop skills to keep themselves safe. For example, when staff became aware of a substance circulating in the local area, they researched it and spoke with the child about its physical, social, psychological and financial impact. This supports children to recognise risk and make safer choices when away from home.

Staff support children to manage peer relationships in the home, which has helped to build resilience. One child spoke positively about living with other children and demonstrated empathy towards peers.

Since the last inspection, three staff have started working in the home. The manager has effective recruitment systems in place to reduce the risk of unsuitable individuals caring for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager demonstrates exceptionally high aspirations for children and leads with clear passion and commitment. Strong, trusting relationships are firmly established, enabling children to respond positively, feel secure and engage meaningfully in their care. This reflects a child-centred culture where positive outcomes are consistently prioritised.

There is a thorough and insightful understanding of the home's strengths, with a continual focus on development and improvement. Forward planning is proactive and embedded in practice, ensuring that the service not only sustains high standards but continues to evolve in response to children's needs.

Staff describe a highly supportive and empowering environment, where they feel valued and well guided. As a result, staff morale is high, practice is consistent, and children benefit from stable, confident and nurturing care delivered by a motivated workforce.

Relationships with professionals are effective, characterised by clear communication and confident, constructive challenge where necessary. This ensures that multi-agency working strengthens outcomes for children through shared accountability and high expectations.

The manager advocates relentlessly for children, ensuring that their best interests remain central to all decision-making. Children's views, wishes and feelings are well understood and actively shape care planning and day-to-day practice. This helps children feel that their views make a difference.

Monitoring systems are highly effective, identifying learning that is swiftly translated into improved practice. This demonstrates a strong learning culture and a commitment to continuous improvement across the home.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should have in place a consistent assessment process for the child in advance of the placement, whereby the other relevant person's input is sought on the implementation and arrangements for the care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.30)

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: 1249326

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Lyme vale Court, Lyme Drive, Parklands, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 6NW

Responsible individual: David Doorbar

Registered manager: Emma Highet

Inspectors

Helen Dunn, Social Care Inspector

Reshma Kodampur, Social Care Inspector

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