

2538285

Registered provider: Union House North West Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional needs. Four children are currently being cared for in this home.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and has been in post and registered with Ofsted since 3 February 2023.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 August 2023

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: 6 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Good
24/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have good relationships with staff. They enjoy spending time with staff and will actively seek them out. Children share their news with staff and staff respond with nurture and praise.

Children feel comfortable in the home. They have their belongings, such as musical instruments and bikes, in communal areas. Children always have access to all areas of the home. Staff encourage the children to make themselves drinks and snacks when they want to.

Children understand their individual circumstances and their care plans. Staff help them to contribute to their own plans. This gives children the opportunity to highlight what is most important to them. Staff explain key terms and processes to the children in a way they understand. This helps children to contribute to their meetings.

There are alarms on children's bedroom doors which are turned on overnight. These are not required for safeguarding purposes. The alarms are intrusive and do not respect the children's right to privacy. A requirement has been made in relation to the use of monitoring and surveillance in the home, to ensure that alarms are only used when there is a clear rationale for doing so.

Staff support children to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy. However, some children need more support with this. Also, decorating work in one of the children's bedrooms needs to be finished. A requirement has been made in relation to this.

Children are well prepared for moving into and out of the home. Staff meet the children and children visit the home before moving in. When children arrive, staff provide them with information about routines, expectations and their rights. Equally, staff support children who are moving on from the home to meet the people who are going to help care for them and to visit their new home. Staff provide emotional support to children and help them explore their feelings about moving on.

All children have an education placement. When children are reluctant to attend school, staff continue to regularly speak to school professionals. Staff contribute to meetings to enable multi-agency planning regarding education. Staff are flexible regarding the needs of the children and support home and online learning when this is needed. Children who attend school are making good progress, including achieving the necessary qualifications to enrol in college.

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

Risks to the children are well understood by the staff team. Staff understand how to keep the children safe and risk assessments are regularly updated. This has resulted in a significant reduction in episodes of going missing for one child. However, risk assessments are lengthy and strategies are difficult to find and follow. A recommendation has been made in relation to this.

The manager is proactive in relation to risk. They identify potential risks and staff teach children how to protect themselves and stay safe. This includes on matters such as open water swimming, and drugs and alcohol.

Children are rarely restrained. On the one occasion a child was held, this was with minimal force and for a minimal amount of time. Following this, the manager gave the child and staff the opportunity to reflect on the incident. The manager reviewed this incident quickly and ensured the recording was accurate.

Staff encourage positive behaviour through daily incentives. Children rarely receive consequences. When staff use consequences, these are proportionate and given as a last resort. The manager reviews them in the agreed timescales and reflects when their use has not been successful.

The manager and staff prioritise fire safety in the home. All routine checks are undertaken within timescale. Staff ensure that children understand what to do in an emergency. The manager and staff respond to increased risk robustly. This has included providing fire-retardant bedding and carrying out safety work with the children.

Staff store and administer medication safely. They ensure that medication records are complete and correct. This includes recording when a child has refused medication. A previous recommendation in relation to this has been met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is committed to their role and has excellent relationships with the children. One child said that if they wanted to make a complaint they would speak directly with the manager to resolve it.

The manager provides a supportive environment to the staff. Supervisions are regular and thorough. The manager and leaders provide extra practical support to staff who need this. The manager undertakes annual appraisals with all staff. Therefore, a previous recommendation in relation to this has been met.

There is a consistent staff team. Staff say that they enjoy being at the home and that the manager is approachable. This means the children experience consistent care and can form relationships of trust.

External professionals and parents have good relationships with the manager and staff. The manager seeks feedback from stakeholders and uses this to develop the home.

Induction training for the staff is thorough. The manager identifies training needs for individual staff and meets these needs. However, the manager has not identified child-specific training in relation to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Therefore, a recommendation in relation to this has been made.

The manager ensures that the children's records are detailed and current. Records are regularly reviewed as part of the manager's monitoring of the home. Risk assessments and case records no longer include the personal details of other children. Therefore, a previous recommendation in relation to this has been met.

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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d)) This particularly relates to audible door alarms on the children's bedroom doors only being used at night when identified as necessary.	30 September 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(c)(i)) This specifically relates to the cleanliness of some of the children's bedrooms and decorating work in another bedroom.	21 September 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure staff provide care which meets each child's needs and promotes their welfare, taking account of their mental health and assessed needs. Specifically, that staff receive training to meet children's individual needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Specifically, ensuring that the arrangements to protect the children are clearly outlined. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2538285

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Union House North West Limited

Registered provider address: 82 Blackburn Road, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 1LL

Responsible individual: Margaret Hughes

Registered manager: Ciara Beckett

Inspector

Sarah Huntbatch, Social Care Inspector

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