

2561970

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home offers care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There is a new manager in post who started work at the home in May 2025. She has applied to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. The children spoke to the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 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: 5 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2024	Full	Good
04/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
08/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All children have continued to live in the home since the last inspection. They are all making progress, which has been assisted by their ability to build trusting relationships with the staff and manager.

The manager and staff provide a supportive environment and are enthusiastic about children's progress. This approach has led to a significant reduction in incidents in the home, specifically allegations and behaviour management episodes.

Children are making good progress in their education. For example, one child attends school every day and is enjoying his learning experiences. Two children now attend school regularly and have completed GCSE exams. This is considerable progress for these children after previously having lengthy periods out of education.

Children have detailed health plans and are registered with the relevant primary healthcare services. They attend routine health appointments with good support and encouragement from staff. Children have access to the services they need to promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

Staff support children to see their families and those who matter most to them. Staff sensitively help children to increase the time they are able to spend with their families. This enables children to make long-lasting, positive memories and helps to develop their sense of identity.

Children are encouraged and supported to express their wishes and feelings. They have regular house meetings with staff and individual key-work sessions to discuss their care. Because of this, children feel valued and their views contribute to the quality of care they receive.

The manager ensures that the home's physical environment is well maintained and furnished. Children's bedrooms are personalised and specific to their interests and needs. Furthermore, there are photos of children on display throughout the home. This homely atmosphere helps children to feel comfortable and valued in the home.

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

Children have thorough individual risk assessments. These are regularly reviewed and updated. They provide staff with clear information about the risks to children and how they should respond. Recording processes are good and evidence the action taken and the follow up work completed to help children learn to keep themselves safe.

Children are only held when it is necessary to keep them and others safe. The manager has oversight of all incidents, and debriefs take place with children and the staff

involved. This helps the manager to understand incidents and review the actions taken by staff. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort to protect children from harm, accident or injury, and is proportionate to their behaviour.

There have been no missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. However, staff know the procedures to follow when a child is missing from home and ensure that they work together in a well-coordinated way, adhering to statutory guidance.

The management response to children making allegations against staff is generally good. Leaders act quickly to involve the relevant agencies, and they follow their child protection procedures effectively. However, managers have failed to notify Ofsted of allegations made against staff. This lack of due diligence does not promote children's safety and welfare.

Children understand how to stay safe online. Staff use their training effectively to help children understand the risks when accessing the internet. The home's internet system ensures that children only access age-appropriate content. The staff and manager regularly review this to ensure that children are having a safe online experience.

The inspector identified that some of the children were having a detrimental effect on each other. The manager has not ensured that staff consistently positively engage with children. There has been no long-term planning to mitigate potential problems. As a result, some children frequently become unsettled and behaviours escalate.

The manager ensures that staff who are recruited to work in the home are subject to all necessary checks. This helps to ensure that staff who work in the home are safe to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has changed since the last inspection. The manager is beginning to develop a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She is supported by a team of staff who are committed to helping children and improving their life chances and opportunities.

Staff benefit from a range of training courses to help to develop their knowledge, skills and professional practice. New staff receive an induction programme and are enrolled on the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. As a result, staff are trained to meet the needs of the children in their care and gain the required qualification within timescales.

Managers and staff receive regular supervision. This means that they are being provided with regular opportunities to receive feedback on their practice.

Leaders fail to ensure that the oversight and monitoring systems in place fully support the development of the home. For example, the home has recently had some

challenges but there has not been any reflection by managers with the staff to promote learning and share valuable information. This means that any lessons learned from incidents or instances where there have been shortfalls in practice have not been shared with staff. This lack of open discussion does not promote a learning culture in the home.

The manager and staff work effectively with a range of other professionals, including social workers, school staff and health professionals. As a result, children benefit from coordinated care and make good progress.

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that a staff debrief and review takes place.	31 July 2025
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;	31 July 2025

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	31 July 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: 2561970

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Emmaline Scoular

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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