

2565231

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 provider operates this home. The home provides care for up to three children who have experienced complex or developmental trauma with social and emotional difficulties.

The home was registered in March 2020 and the current manager was registered in June 2022.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 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: 2 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

On 20 July 2022, Ofsted carried out an assurance inspection and found serious and widespread concerns. A compliance notice under regulation 12 was raised. On 31 August 2022, Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit and judged that the compliance notice was met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in the home. One professional commented that one child's progress since living at the home was 'excellent' and that staff 'report positives about the child as well as concerns'.

Children trust the staff and told the inspector that they are listened to. Children are treated with respect, and these interactions were observed during the inspection. The children talk openly about their lives to staff, who can reassure them because of these trusting relationships. This enables the children to explore their identity in a safe environment.

The staff advocate well on behalf of the children. This ensures that children's views are represented and their aspirations are promoted. One child has successfully secured a part-time job and a place at college for the next academic year. This means that children have choices and options for their futures.

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard. The children are involved in these choices for the home, and they have personalised their bedrooms. Consequently, children respect the environment they live in and are invested in maintaining this. Children enjoy visiting the neighbouring farm and have helped to feed the lambs.

Children do well with their education. Children's attainment is at an age-appropriate level. They are supported by individualised plans which reduce their anxieties around learning and increase their engagement.

The children are supported to be healthy. The registered manager and her team are now using therapeutic services to support the children's mental health. This has enabled one child to start exploring their early childhood experiences.

Children are supported to take part in activities with staff. These positive experiences are captured in photos, which are displayed throughout the home and in the children's life-story books. These photo books provide the children with an opportunity to revisit their experiences in later life.

The staff support children's relationships with their family members and they have formed meaningful relationships with families. This open approach to supporting family time ensures that children are relaxed and enjoy this time fully.

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

Children said that they feel safe. All staff undertake safeguarding training and know the internal systems for reporting concerns. This helps staff to identify concerns

around exploitation. Staff ensure that children understand the reasons why there are consistent boundaries and actively encourage them to be involved in setting them.

Staff communicate well with social workers, parents and school staff when they have concerns or issues about children that need to be raised. Children are relaxed, comfortable and confident around staff.

Safeguarding concerns are shared appropriately with other professionals. This enables the most relevant professionals to respond collectively to incidents.

There has been a significant reduction in the frequency of children going missing from the home. Each child has a clear plan for staff to follow if the child does go missing. The registered manager uses her professional relationships to respond to episodes of children going missing and to inform responses to future concerns.

Recruitment processes are strong and ensure that applicants are suitable to work with vulnerable children. Interviews with prospective staff are detailed and explore whether their personality and skills match the children's needs.

Staff behaviour management approaches focus on each child and what they respond well to. Recording of incidents is improving and is a focus of staff development. Consequences are also recorded for each child. However, consequences used are repetitive and their effectiveness is not always reviewed. Staff are not imaginative in their use of consequences, which reduces their effectiveness.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has an ambitious vision for the home and demonstrates high standards of care for children. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have a clear development plan in place.

The registered manager has developed effective monitoring systems and seeks the views of children and their families to support the development of the home. They have excellent relationships with the children, their parents and professionals.

Staff are appropriately trained and benefit from regular supervision sessions. The registered manager ensures that staff understand policies, through collectively reviewing these in team meetings. Individual staff are champions for different areas in the home and they undertake these duties with enthusiasm and pride. The turnover of staff is low, which means children receive care from a consistent and experienced staff team.

Children are introduced to the home through careful planning and consideration of their individual needs. Children can get to know the staff and the other children at the home at their own pace. The registered manager ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills to care for each child before they live at the home. Staff involve children who already live at the home to welcome and introduce new

children who will be staying. During this time, the views of children and parents are sought by the registered manager to ensure that the introductions are positive.

The home has a workforce development plan in place; however, this does not include a description of the home's process for managing performance issues with staff and does not detail the ongoing professional development of the staff and the registered manager.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's workforce development plan details the process for managing and improving poor performance and the process and timescales for supervision of practice, and is regularly updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff and the registered manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 2565231

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: Susan Weston

Registered manager: Claire Lumsden

Inspector

Mark Dickinson, Social Care Inspector

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