

2711614

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Ltd

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 four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered in May 2023. There has been no registered manager since October 2023. A manager has been appointed and has not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive outcomes living in this home. Some children in the home are making good progress with their education. Leaders and managers challenge placing authorities when children do not receive education. Additionally, some children are significantly reducing previous concerns around missing from home.

Children know how to complain. Their views are respected, and complaints are managed swiftly. This helps children to build trusting relationships with staff, leaders and managers.

Children are supported to maintain positive relationships with people who are important to them. Staff listen to children's views, wishes and feelings about family time, and plans are put in place to make this safe and meaningful. This reduces children's anxieties and helps them to settle well in the home.

Children are supported to actively participate in their care, and they are given opportunities to share their views in children's meetings. However, house meetings are not held regularly. This prevents children from routinely being able to express their views.

Children experience positive beginnings in the home. Before children move in, they have the opportunity to visit the home to meet the staff and the children already living there. However, children who already live in the home and the staff are not always informed about new children who are due to move in. This is a missed opportunity by leaders and managers to consider children's and staff's views in the planning process.

The physical environment is maintained to a high standard. Any damage or wear and tear is quickly repaired. Children like their bedrooms because they have personalised them. The children say that it feels and looks like a family home for them.

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

Children have good relationships with each other. Staff swiftly act to address any fallouts or disagreements between children. Regular informal discussions about respecting other people are helping children to live together safely.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills. For example, children learn how to cook, tidy their bedrooms and do their own laundry. This support helps children to learn and develop important life skills.

Children have regular discussions that focus on their individual needs and help them to understand risk. The discussion sessions are in line with their plans and demonstrate that staff know children well and are helping to reduce risks to children. This helps children to receive appropriate help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings.

Allegations against staff are managed well. Leaders and managers take action in a timely way and follow safeguarding procedures. The records in relation to allegations are detailed and clear.

Permanent staff know and understand the children's risks well. However, some of the children's risk assessments are not regularly updated. This compromises non-permanent staff's ability to minimise risk to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leadership, management and the staff team have recently become unsettled. Due to staff leaving, there has been an increase in the use of agency staff caring for the children. Although leaders and managers attempt to use agency staff that are familiar with the home this does not always happen. To date, this has not had a detrimental impact on the children living in the home as they are settled. However, if this does not improve, it will mean that children do not experience consistent care. Furthermore, agency staff do not have access to the same online administration tools as permanent staff. Therefore, agency staff record in a book that is not stored safely and this compromises the confidentiality of children's information. Recruitment of permanent staff is one of the areas that leaders and managers are progressing to improve the quality and consistency of practice and to provide stability for children.

Some staff report that they do not feel well supported or receive adequate communication from leaders and managers. One staff said, 'There have been a lot of changes recently and the instability is affecting staff morale.'

Supervision is not regular. This does not ensure that staff are able to regularly discuss their own needs and reflect on their practice. Additionally, this limits leaders and managers oversight of staff development and training.

Staff can access a wide range of training to increase their skills and knowledge. However, staff have not been offered specific training to meet the needs of the children in their care. For example, not all staff have completed de-escalation training which would help them improve how they manage children's behaviour.

Feedback from professionals is varied. Relationships with the children's professional networks need to be strengthened to ensure that all relevant information is shared appropriately. One professional said, 'Communication is an issue in relation to the sharing of information.'

Team meetings do not happen regularly. This is a missed opportunity for leaders and managers to support staff and to communicate information relevant to the children's lives.

Leaders and managers have developed a comprehensive workforce development plan. However, the internal monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying and responding to areas to develop. For example, the shortfalls in children's case recordings, inconsistency of children's meetings, and team meetings and the lack of staff supervision. While this has had no impact on the care provided to children, it has the potential to do so if not improved.

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, 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they have effective monitoring systems in place to monitor the child's progress and staff practice. Leaders and managers must ensure that they continue to recruit permanent staff.	15 January 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	15 January 2024

undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive regular supervision and are offered training that supports them to meet the needs of the children in their care.	
The registered person must ensure that the following items, which may be kept in electronic form, are kept in an accessible manner— children's case records (see regulation 36). (Regulation 38 (i)). In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children's records are stored safely.	15 January 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they assess the risk to each child and include the safety measures to be taken by staff to minimise risk are kept up to date and reviewed. ('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: 2711614

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Unity Residential Care Ltd, 30 Chadwell Avenue,
Romford RM6 4QH

Responsible individual: Nasae Evanson

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Melvin Davies, Social Care Inspector

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