

2717656

Registered provider: United Homes Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home which provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted on 20 June 2023. The registered manager left in February 2024. A new manager has been appointed. They have not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. One child was spoken to.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Leadership and management of the home have been unstable and this has impacted on the quality of care children receive. Despite some areas of positive practice, leaders have not always taken appropriate action, which compromises the safety and welfare of the children.

Before children move into the home, leaders and managers do not thoroughly assess their individual risks and needs or consider the needs of the children already living there. They fail to consider the impact children's differing needs and risks will have on each other, which has negatively affected children's day-to-day experiences. Additionally, leaders and managers do not ensure that they have up-to-date care plans from placing authorities. As a result, children's needs have not been met and practice in the home fails to be child centred.

Despite this, children have good relationships with staff. Staff are caring and they know the children's personalities well. Staff invest time in getting to know children. They have regular and open conversations to gain insight into the children's lives and build trust. The children think highly of the acting manager. One child said, 'I get on with the acting manager the most as she listens to my wants and needs.'

Children's health needs are understood and met. Staff support children to attend routine and specialist health appointments. As a result, children's health and well-being has improved while living in the home.

Children's progress in education is varied. One child does not have an identified school place, despite the efforts of the staff to secure an education provision for them. Children who are not attending school are supported with home and one-to-one tuition so that they can continue to learn. This maintains consistency and structure for children while a suitable learning provision is found. Staff are actively helping one older child to look for employment and to prepare them for employment.

Children are encouraged to engage in a wide range of activities. One child regularly goes horse riding, which they love. Activities are also provided in the home, including cooking and movie and games nights.

Children are not given opportunities to share their views, wishes and feelings about their care. Children do not participate in their care planning, risk assessments or children's meetings, to ensure that they are effectively involved in the decision-making processes that impact significantly on their lives. This hinders the children's ability to influence things that affect them and help staff to understand children's issues from their perspective.

Children's bedrooms are not kept to a good and hygienic standard. One child's bedroom is spray painted with graffiti, another child's bedroom was very untidy, with old food and clothes scattered across the floor. There was broken furniture in another's child's bedroom, which had a strong smell of cannabis. Although staff try to deter children from misusing drugs, this is not effective.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children go missing from the home more frequently than they did before living in the home. One child is regularly missing, leading to the police being contacted daily, due to the child being at high risk. Staff follow appropriate protocols. However, when the child returns home, no conversations take place about where the child has been. There is no management oversight of the incident reports and there is no clear plan of action to protect the child and reduce their incidents of going missing. The regular presence of police is having a negative impact on the other children in the home. Some are now going missing from the home when this was not a previous concern.

Staff struggle to manage incidents and de-escalate negative behaviours. As a result, the police are often required to support staff in the home. Staff keep records of incidents that occur and there is management oversight of records. However, the records do not identify outcomes and actions taken. This prevents staff from helping children to reflect and learn new ways to manage behaviours positively and safely when they are upset or frustrated.

Staff engage children in meaningful key-work sessions. They work with children to address their specific risks and vulnerabilities. This supports children to develop skills and strategies to help keep themselves safer.

Searches of children's bedrooms and possessions are not carried out sensitively. Most bedroom searches are conducted regularly and are not due to staff believing that there is a risk of harm to children. Bedroom searches are not appropriately recorded, and reports do not include the reasons for the search and how this relates to the child's risk assessment and do not show management oversight of the decision to carry out a search.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management of the home are poor. Ofsted was not informed as required that the registered manager had left. There has been poor oversight of the home, which has led to the shortfalls found and leaders have failed to identify concerns. The responsible individual recognises the impact this has had on the day-to-day running on the home and care provided to children. They are taking effective action to improve children's experiences and the quality of care they receive.

Staff do not receive regular and effective supervision and appraisal. Staff supervision by managers does not focus on children's plans and needs. This does not enable staff to

reflect on the care they need to give children to help them to make good progress. Managers do not focus on staff's skills and development, which further hinders their ability to meet children's needs and provide good-quality care.

Leaders and managers failed to report an allegation made by a child against a member of staff to Ofsted as required. Although the allegation was investigated by the relevant safeguarding professional, the local authority designated officer's recommendations were not followed and no support was given to the child and staff involved.

Staff training is not completed within the required timescales. One member of staff had not completed their induction training or safeguarding training before working night shifts. The lack of safeguarding training compromises staff's knowledge and their ability to recognise concerns and take decisive action if necessary.

The home's workforce development plan does not provide plans to support staff. There is no plan for further training to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose. Furthermore, there is no detail of the process for managing and improving poor performance or the process and timescales for supervision of practice.

Ofsted has not received the independent person's report since October 2024. Leaders and managers said this was due to a change of independent person and miscommunication. The lack of regular reporting limits the regulator's oversight of the home and is in breach of regulation.

Ofsted has not received the quality of care review. This further demonstrates poor monitoring and oversight of the home and the care provided to children. This impacts on the ability of leaders and managers to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses, prevent shortfalls and take effective action to address poor practice and ensure that there is continuous improvement.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that there is a safeguarding culture that promotes children's safety and well-being following incidents and allegations. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff are proactive and support children to protect them and reduce incidents of going missing. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff are skilled and able to manage incidents without relying on the police.	4 April 2025
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	4 April 2025

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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that management of the home is effective and there is an understanding of the impact care is having on children. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff have the relevant training to help them to meet children’s needs.	
The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home’s care. ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(e))	4 April 2025

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children are given the opportunity to share their views in a way that is beneficial for them. Leaders and managers must ensure that discussions take place with children following incidents to help staff to understand children's experiences and provide them with the most appropriate support.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff receive regular and effective supervision and annual appraisals.	4 April 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(c) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they inform the regulator of allegations and the actions taken.	4 April 2025

The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a))	4 April 2025
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b))	4 April 2025
The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place—	4 April 2025

a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home;

a person ceases to carry on or manage the home.
(Regulation 49 (a)(b))

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they inform the regulator when the manager of the home has changed.

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the children already living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that a child's bedroom is not routinely unless there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

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: 2717656

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: United Homes Group Ltd

Registered provider address: 211 Station Road, Harrow HA1 2TP

Responsible individual: Akash Dhanoya

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sadia Akhtar, Social Care Inspector

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