

SC488930

Registered provider: United Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to five children with emotional and social difficulties.

No children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager no longer works at the home. There is currently no manager leading the home and it was being overseen by an operations manager.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 November 2024

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	requires improvement to be 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: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the last assurance inspection, serious and widespread concerns were identified in relation to the care and protection of children. Subsequently, Ofsted varied the conditions of registration of the home. The provider temporarily closed the home. A monitoring visit undertaken on 10 June 2024 resulted in the conditions being lifted and the home resumed caring for children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/10/2021	Full	Good
01/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/03/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Following the monitoring visit on 10 June 2024, the home resumed caring for children. During this time, one child has lived at the home for approximately three weeks but has since moved out. At the time of inspection there was no children being cared for in the home.

Staff provide tailored and individualised care. Staff knew the child well and understood their needs. For example, staff supported the child to access a culturally appropriate hairdresser that specialised in the child's type of hair. This helped the child to feel valued and understood.

The child enjoyed meaningful relationships with staff. Staff spent time with the child and encouraged them to access the local community. The child was supported to do things they enjoyed such as getting their nails done, going shopping and baking. As a result, the child settled quickly and felt comfortable in the home.

Staff supported the child to maintain important relationships, helping to reduce the child's feelings of loss and isolation when living far from home. Staff welcomed the child's family and friends into the home. The child had a say in how this important time was spent and plans were agreed in collaboration with the social worker, ensuring they were safe and well considered.

Children's information is not effectively recorded. There are considerable gaps in the recording of the child's daily care such as what the child had eaten or what activities they had done. This is an area for development.

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

Staff know how to keep children safe. Safety plans were in place and were updated after each incident. Plans were comprehensive and told staff how to respond. Risks were assessed in collaboration with the social worker, ensuring an effective approach to safeguarding.

Staff responded well when the child went missing from the home. Appropriate agencies were informed such as the police and social care. Staff went looking for the child and took effective action. Staff continued their search until the child was safely found.

Staff respond well to behaviours that are difficult to manage such as self-injurious behaviour. Appropriate safeguards are put in place such as seeing the child regularly when risks of self-injury are high. Staff help children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff helped the child to find healthier strategies to manage their feelings and anxieties. This helps children to develop resilience and reduces risk of harm.

Staff are safely recruited to work in the home. The required checks are undertaken by the provider. Staff undergo a comprehensive induction programme where essential training and tasks are completed. Staff's performance is regularly reviewed by the manager to ensure they are competent in their role. This helps to ensure staff are supported and provide good standards of care.

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

There have been shortfalls in the registered manager's oversight and management of the home. For example, there was a delay in the manager assessing the child's risks and putting safety plans in place for staff to follow. A senior management audit quickly identified the shortfalls and actions were promptly taken to rectify these.

The manager does not regularly review the information that is recorded by staff. For example, there was no management oversight on the recording of the missing incident or on the child's daily care records. As a result, the manager had poor oversight and monitoring of the care provided to the child.

There are no systems in place to review incidents or placement endings. Since the child has left, managers have not reviewed or reflected on the events that took place. Therefore, missing an opportunity to learn from the experience and improve the service.

Supervisions take place regularly. Important topics such as training and safeguarding are discussed. However, staff are not given the opportunity to reflect upon how their own feelings and responses may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. This is an area for development.

The home use bedroom door alarms to safeguard children at night-time. These have been appropriately used to minimise the risk of a child going missing. However, there is a shortfall in written consents from the child's social worker.

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

Statutory requirement

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; 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)(f)(h)) This refers to the manager having effective oversight of the home and maintaining records to reflect children's current needs, risks and day to day care. Ensuring that reviews are carried out and learning from incidents and placement ends are used to improve the service.	31 January 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept—	31 January 2025

securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there.
(Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c) (2)(c))

This particularly refers to all records being available and up to date.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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: SC488930

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: United Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Old Coach House, Drinsey Nook, Lincoln, Nottinghamshire LN1 2JJ

Responsible individual: Beth Morrish

Registered manager: Samantha Rafferty-Preston

Inspector

Emma Dacres, social care inspector

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