

SC488943

Registered provider: Unity Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who have experienced social and emotional difficulties.

There is a permanent manager who registered with Ofsted in October 2025. They are working towards a leadership and management qualification.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2 children living at the home. They both spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 April 2026

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: 23 September 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2025	Full	Good
05/11/2024	Full	Good
12/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding

Summary of findings

Children receive individualised care aligned with their needs and wishes. This supports them to make progress. Two children benefit from long-term stability, while 2 have experienced behavioural escalation affecting their stability. Relationships with staff are positive, and health and education are prioritised. Children feel heard and live in a warm, homely environment. Safeguarding arrangements are effective, with risks well managed. There are effective monitoring systems in place that promote a reflective learning culture. There have been some staff sufficiency challenges, meaning that children are sometimes cared for by less-experienced and unqualified staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide individualised care to children that considers their assessed needs, views, wishes and feelings. This practice contributes to some children making measurable progress from their starting points and helps them to achieve positive outcomes.

Children benefit from warm, trusting relationships with staff and managers. This supports children's social engagement and promotes their emotional wellbeing and safety. Children enjoy a range of activities, and their interests are promoted by staff. One child spoke about plans to watch their favourite band who are touring in the summer, while another child spoke about the pet they had recently purchased and is enjoying caring for.

Staff ensure that children register with local health services and can access services for support when required. Children attend routine checks and are in good physical health. Staff cook a wide range of meals that provide children with the nutrition they need. When there are concerns about a child's diet, staff seek medical advice and guidance.

Education is prioritised by staff and managers who advocate effectively for children. This ensures children's learning needs are met and concerns identified are escalated appropriately. As a result, children's attendance at school improves and they are working towards their career aspirations.

Children's views are actively sought and respected, improving their understanding of decisions and strengthening participation. Staff ensure that children spend time with people who are important to them. This supports their identity and maintains their support network, which is beneficial to them as they prepare for adulthood. Children experience a nurturing, homely environment.

Two children benefit from living in a stable home, developing a strong sense of belonging and security. However, escalating behaviours for 2 children led to earlier-than-planned moves from the home, meaning they did not experience consistent care,

routine, and familiarity. Managers work closely with local authorities and prospective homes to ensure future homes meet the children's needs. For example, one child moved from a group setting to live in a home on their own, which was better suited to them.

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

Physical intervention is only used by staff as a last resort and only when necessary. Holds used by staff are proportionate and reduce the risk of children hurting themselves or others. Managers review incidents and identify learning that informs future practice. When there are allegations against staff, managers work effectively with professionals to review and investigate concerns.

When children have attempted to leave without permission, staff have effectively de-escalated situations, maintained line of sight, and supported their return. As a result, there have been no incidents when children's whereabouts have been unknown. This helps to keep children safe.

There are effective behaviour management systems in place that focus on positive recognition. This motivates children to make good choices. On rare occasions, staff complete restorative work with children to help them develop an awareness of behaviours that are socially unacceptable. This means that children develop an age-appropriate understanding of social values that helps them to engage positively in the community they live in.

Staff manage peer conflict well, and children are not always aware of tensions. While rules and boundaries are in place, these have not always been applied consistently; managers are addressing this. Since the last inspection, risks for 2 children have reduced. Although staff have found children's behaviours challenging at times, children are kept safe, with managers reinforcing practice through team discussions and quizzes.

Some new staff have started work in the home. Managers have safe recruitment systems in place. This reduces the risk of children being cared for by unsuitable individuals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are ambitious, with high expectations for children. They ensure that staff provide a high standard of individualised care. Effective monitoring systems support a clear understanding of children's lived experiences.

Leaders understand the home's strengths and areas for development, with attention to small but meaningful details that enhance children's experiences. Children's views are valued, and participation is strong. Leaders promote equality, diversity and tolerance, and take concerns seriously, ensuring investigations are thorough.

Managers work with professionals who support children, and they escalate concerns and advocate on behalf of children. On one occasion, this resulted in some differing opinions on how best to support one child at school.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from managers. They receive regular supervision and have their performance formally appraised annually. Mandatory training and training specific to the needs of the children who live in the home is completed by staff. Regular team meetings provide reflective spaces for staff to review children's needs and agree plans on how to support them.

Changes within the staff team have resulted in children being cared for by new staff who are in their probation period. This means their performance is not yet fully assessed and understood by managers. This practice does not effectively support new staff to develop their skills and experience. Furthermore, it increases the risk of children's needs not being met effectively.

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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that there are always sufficiently experienced staff caring for children in line with the home's statement of purpose and who have been assessed as competent following a probation period.	9 June 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to—	9 June 2026

manage and review the placement of each child in the home;
and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ii)(iii))

In particular, the registered person should work with placing authorities to manage behaviours and risk to prevent placements ending earlier than planned.

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: SC488943

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:

Registered manager: Kathryn Saunders

Inspector

Helen Dunn, Social Care Inspector

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