

# 1274672

Registered provider: Harmony Childrens Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to two children, up to the age of 17, on a medium- or long-term basis. The children may have emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties. The home can also care for children who have learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders.

The manager has been registered since August 2021.

At the time of the inspection, there was only one child living at this home.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 4 March 2020, to carry out an interim inspection. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 29 to 30 September 2021

**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 **good**

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

**Date of last inspection:** 4 March 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 04/03/2020      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 02/10/2019      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The child living at this home has been helped to feel safe and secure by a dedicated staff team. The commitment from the staff has ensured that the child has experienced affection and nurture as plans are made for his future.

Staff have developed positive relationships with the child. The impact of these relationships is recognised by the child's family and social worker. They described the staff as 'nurturing', 'caring' and 'committed'.

There are ongoing clinical assessments being carried out by the child and adolescent mental health services. The staff have provided a safe environment for the child, which has helped the child psychologists to make their assessments. As a result, plans are being formulated so that targeted support can be provided.

The child's parents value the commitment from the staff, who ensure that the child has regular family time. This has included having birthday celebrations at the home with family members. One of the child's parent said, 'They listen to me and communicate really well. The manager has been very supportive.'

The educational prospects for the child are now developing because of the support and advocacy of the manager. She has enabled the child's voice to be heard, which has created a shared awareness of his experience of school. This demonstrates that children can influence the help and support that they receive.

Complaints are taken seriously. After the child raised concerns about how he was being cared for by some staff members, the manager investigated the complaint and put an action plan in place. The child was kept informed throughout the process until the matter was concluded successfully.

Staff know the child's hobbies and interests so they can help the child to access activities such as football, going to his favourite shops or playing games at home. The child has a passion for aquatics and has a large tank where he keeps his favourite-coloured fish. Although the child can be a reluctant to engage in positive activities outside of the home, the staff are persistent in creating opportunities for him to take part in fun experiences.

Several internal areas of the home have been damaged because of the child's aggressive behaviour. The manager is quick to organise maintenance and there is an ongoing programme of repair work. However, the outside of the building looks tired, and needs uplifting. There is a continued delay in having this work completed.

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

High levels of staff supervision help to reduce the risk of harm to the child. Staff respond in a nurturing way to incidents of verbal and physical aggression, which has helped to create a safe environment for the child to live in.

The child rarely goes missing from this home. The increased level of staff supervision helps to reduce the risk of the child absconding. When he has left the home, the staff have worked well with the police to return him safely.

The use of restraint has not occurred. Staff do use physical guides when there is a risk of them being harmed because of aggressive behaviour. The use of alternative behaviour management strategies reduces the need for physical intervention. This has helped the child to understand that restraint is no longer the only outcome when challenging behaviour occurs.

Staff are trained in behaviour management and de-escalation techniques. However, the agency staff who work at the home have not had this training. The manager does not have a risk management plan in place for non-trained staff. This lack of training for agency staff could result in the child's safety being compromised, as these staff do not have the skills needed to de-escalate challenging behaviour.

The manager has individualised risk assessments in place relating to the child's needs. The risk assessments provide the staff with strategies for keeping him safe and reducing the risk of harm.

The manager's matching risk assessment does not sufficiently evaluate all the information known about the child's needs. This could result in children being inappropriately matched, creating an increased risk of harm and/or placement instability.

Staff provide consistent, positive boundaries, which has helped the child to recognise the expectations of his behaviour. While the boundaries can be difficult for the child to accept, the staff are persistent in promoting them in order to help him to have a more structured day.

When there are safeguarding concerns, they are managed swiftly by the management team, in consultation with the relevant safeguarding agencies.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is benefiting from having a new manager. She has provided the home with stability as the staff continue to develop their knowledge and skills. The manager is child focused and wants the best for the children.

Staff changes have had a negative impact on the quality of care provided for the child. The child has been cared for by unfamiliar staff, which has had a detrimental

impact on his progress. However, the core group of staff have worked hard to deliver consistent care, so as to reduce the impact of staff leaving.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place. She ensures that the child's plans are up to date and provide staff with clarity on what is needed from day to day. The child's case records are well organised and are completed to a good standard. The style and clarity of recordings mean that the children have an increased understanding of their time living in the home.

The manager is developing a reflective team culture. Team meetings are used effectively to discuss the needs of the child and review the operational aspects of the home. Meetings provide the staff with the opportunity to reflect and agree on the strategies they feel are necessary to care for the child.

Staff receive regular supervision. Sessions are reflective and show that staff have opportunities to discuss the support they need to fulfil their roles. However, the same quality of supervision is not provided for agency staff, despite them working at the home on a regular basis. This has a negative impact on the experience of the child, as not all staff have the guidance that they need to cope with the challenges the role brings.

The independent person's monitoring reports submitted to the regulator lack curiosity and evaluation of the child's day-to-day experience. Also, there is minimal external consultation with the child's social worker and parents. This does not provide the commissioners, parents and the regulator with reassurance that the quality of care for the child is being rigorously scrutinised by the independent person.

Safe recruitment practice has not been established at this home. A new staff member who was found through an agency did not have an interview. Managers did not ask safeguarding questions to further explore whether the staff member had the knowledge and skills needed to keep children safe. This could result in children being exposed to harm.

Information about the agency workers gathered by the manager is inconsistent. She has failed to explore the agency workers' skills and experience prior to them working at the home. For some, it is unclear if they have a relevant childcare background. This demonstrates that the manager does not have sufficient recruitment checks in place to safeguard children.

The regulator was not notified when an incident occurred requiring police to attend the home in response to the child's behaviour. This limits the regulator's ability to scrutinise safeguarding incidents, and could increase the risk of harm to children.

# 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        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home;</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that the recruitment process and the use of agency workers do not put at risk the safety and well-being of children. The registered person must also ensure that all staff members are interviewed, and checks are completed using safer recruitment practice.</p> | 31 October 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40 (4)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 31 October 2021 |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is decorated in a way that enhances the living experience of children. In particular, the outside of the home needs renovation, so that the space is inviting and the garden is a safe area for children to play in. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that for those staff who are not trained in the home's chosen behaviour management model, a risk management plan is in place, so that staff have the direction and strategies needed to safely manage incidents of challenging behaviour. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff, including agency staff members, are supervised regularly in line with the home's statement of purpose, to help ensure that they have the support and help they need to effectively care for the children living at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- The registered person should ensure that the impact risk assessment sufficiently evaluates a child's needs prior to them being admitted. The registered person should ensure that all information that has been provided about the child is used to support the assessment and evaluation of a child's suitability. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent visitor regularly consults with people who are external to the home, including the children's social workers. Also, the registered provider must ensure that the independent visitor's report rigorously scrutinises the quality of care provided for children, and evaluates whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

## 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:** 1274672

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Harmony Childrens Services

**Registered provider address:** 11 Park Place, Leeds, Yorkshire LS1 2RX

**Responsible individual:** Mark Raw

**Registered manager:** Deborah Jagger

## Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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