

2495967

Registered provider: Harmony Childcare Residential Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has resigned from her post since the last inspection. An interim manager was appointed and has been in day-to-day charge since the monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 February 2023 and has not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 16 March 2023

This monitoring visit

On 16 and 17 February 2023, a monitoring visit was undertaken to investigate information received by Ofsted that raised concerns about safeguarding practices and the leadership and management of the home. The inspector identified serious and widespread concerns during that visit. As a result, a restriction of accommodation was issued. In addition, six requirements and two recommendations were made.

On this visit, the inspector examined the progress made by managers and staff in meeting the requirements made at the last inspection and whether the notice restricting accommodation had been adhered to.

The provider has adhered to the restriction of accommodation because no children have moved into the home. The inspector found that three out of six requirements and two recommendations had been met.

Two children lived at the home at the time of the visit. One child has moved out of the home since the last monitoring visit and another child is due to move on soon. The provider has made this decision because managers and staff are unable to meet the child's complex needs.

The children benefit from a more settled environment, and there has been a reduction in incidents since the last monitoring visit.

Managers have reflected on the shortfalls found at the last monitoring visit. This has enabled them to devise an action plan and reflect on shortfalls with the staff team.

Improvements have been made to the way in which children are provided with opportunities to express their views. Children have their say in key-work sessions and in general conversations with staff. New systems have been implemented, such as a 'you said, we did' system. This helps children to feel reassured that their wishes and feelings are listened to and that staff take action in response to them.

Daily routines for children have improved. This is helping one child have better structure during the school day, even though she is not attending school. Managers have worked alongside other agencies to review the child's education needs in an attempt to find her a school that can meet her needs. Additional assessments are being considered to support this.

Although staff have provided children with improved routines, staff are not yet working together to consistently ensure that children understand expectations around their behaviours. For example, there are clear rules for one child about not watching television until she has completed some educational work, but not all staff adhere to this. Consequently, children receive mixed messages about what is acceptable and what is not.

There has been some progress made in relation to responses to children who go missing from home. Staff understand what actions they need to take and are working more proactively to ensure one child's safe return. However, the manager does not always challenge the local authority when children do not receive return home interviews. There was one occasion when a member of staff did not follow a child's missing-from-home risk management plan. Managers have followed internal performance management processes to address this issue.

Aspects of risk management remain a concern. When a child made an allegation against a member of staff during a physical intervention, this was not reported in line with the home's safeguarding procedures. The manager did not pick this up in his oversight of the record and, as a result, no action was taken to explore what happened and to follow this up with safeguarding agencies. This is now being addressed.

The manager and staff report that conflict continues within the staff team and that this has a negative impact on the team's ability to work together in the best interests of children. This was a feature at the last monitoring visit. Further work is needed to address this issue to improve children's experiences and welfare.

Managers have reviewed the training in place for staff. Some training has taken place in relation to safeguarding, reporting and recording, wishes and feelings, and consequences. However, the effectiveness of this training is not yet being realised. For example, consequences are not always recorded, and safeguarding processes were not followed on one occasion. Further training is planned in relation to supporting children with grief and loss. This will increase staff's skills in understanding and meeting the needs of the children they care for. However, staff have not yet received training in the therapeutic parenting approach outlined in the home's statement of purpose, and this approach is not consistently implemented by the staff team.

The quality of the managers' monitoring and oversight is inconsistent. There has been an element of 'firefighting' since the last inspection to address immediate concerns and support changes in children's care planning. However, monitoring activity by managers is not always identifying shortfalls in practice. This does not promote children's welfare or help staff to improve and develop their practice when needed. Recording in some areas is poor and does not provide a clear narrative of children's day-to-day experiences. In addition, there are missed opportunities for staff to support children. For example, one child told staff that she vapes to relieve stress. However, staff have not supported the child to understand what is causing the stress and develop more appropriate coping strategies.

Recruitment records were not reviewed as part of this visit. This is because there have been no new staff employed to work in the home. Issues pertaining to the safer recruitment that were raised at the last monitoring visit are still under investigation. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

As a result of this visit, requirements in relation to regulations 11, 12, 13 and 32 have been restated. One new recommendation has been made. The notice restricting accommodation remains in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2022	Full	Good
30/08/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
02/10/2019	Full	Good

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 with 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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) The provider must ensure that managers and staff report and respond to allegations of harm. This requirement was raised at the last monitoring visit and is restated.	28 April 2023
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; and 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)(f))	28 April 2023

The provider must ensure that managers identify conflicts within the staff team promptly and appropriately so that this does not impact on the care of children. The provider must ensure that all staff have received the training necessary to carry out their role and that care is delivered in line with the statement of purpose. The provider must ensure that they review, implement and make use of monitoring and review systems to ensure shortfalls are identified and rectified. This requirement was raised at the last monitoring visit and is restated.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or 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, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(a)(b)(d)) This requirement was raised at the last monitoring visit and is restated.	28 April 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and	28 April 2023

positive responses to other children and adults.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(v))

The provider must ensure that staff have the skills to understand and respond to children's behaviours. In addition, ensure that staff help children to understand rules and boundaries and why they are in place.

This requirement was raised at the last monitoring visit and is restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance and supplement that provided by their school through personal, social and health education. Specifically, ensure that children with a history of neglect are supported to understand personal hygiene and puberty. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2495967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Harmony Childcare Residential Homes Limited

Registered provider address: c/o Easyflow Ltd, 38e Vanguard Way, Battlefield Enterprise Park, Shrewsbury SY1 3TG

Responsible individual: Lyndsay Miller

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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