

2495967

Registered provider: Harmony Childcare Residential Homes 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 and is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

A new manager was appointed in July 2022. She holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for children's residential care and has applied to register with Ofsted. A new responsible individual started in post in August 2022.

This inspection occurred in response to Ofsted receiving information of concern relating to a child's welfare and safety.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 August 2022 and 1 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 8 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
02/10/2019	Full	Good
01/07/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leadership and management and safeguarding arrangements in the home are inadequate. This has had a negative impact on some children's experiences, progress and safety and contributes to the judgement of inadequate.

Since the previous inspection, three children have moved in and five children have moved on from the home. The children who lived at the home at the time of the previous inspection all moved on in a planned way and were well supported to do so. A child who moved in following the previous inspection and who has moved on did so in an unplanned way after staff were unable to safely manage a deterioration in the child's behaviour.

Two children lived at the home at the time of this inspection. Their experiences and outcomes are mixed. One child is making good progress and is now fully engaged in education after a period of non-attendance. However, the other child's experience is poor. Weaknesses in care planning have led to poor decision-making by managers and staff and this has left the child at risk of harm. Managers have failed to identify these weaknesses and so have not effectively challenged the child's placing authority and some aspects of staff practice as needed.

The quality of relationships between children and between children and staff varies. During the inspection, inspectors observed warm relationships between staff and children. Staff who have worked at the home since it opened have forged some positive relationships with children. However, one child told the inspector that they had been bullied by another child in the home (who has since left). The work to support both children was minimal and so did not help them to understand the impact of bullying behaviour on themselves and on other people. As a result, one child feels that they were not listened to, and that they cannot trust staff. This child did not feel supported by staff.

The quality and clarity of arrangements for children to spend time with family members are inconsistent. For example, information in one child's records and plans suggests that family time should be supervised, but this is not the case. This brings into question the appropriateness and safety of the contact that children have. For the other child, family time is well managed.

Both children recently went on holiday with staff and enjoyed their time away. This has enabled these two children to have a positive childhood experience.

Children's health needs are met well by staff. Children are registered with appropriate healthcare services and they attend appointments with staff support.

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

Risk management practice by managers and staff is weak. Children's risk assessments do not cover all known risks and they do not set out clear guidance for staff to follow. In addition, managers have failed to recognise that a child is at risk of harm and to take effective steps to reduce this risk. For example, the child spends a lot of time out in the community, including overnight stays. However, managers and staff know little about the addresses where the child is staying and the people with whom the child is spending time. This lack of professional curiosity and effective safety planning has placed the child at unnecessary risk.

It is not clear from records when or whether staff have checked in with one child about their welfare when the child is out in the community. When the child has not been at an agreed location for staff to collect them, staff do not follow the safety plan and report the child as missing from home. This poor practice leaves the child vulnerable to the risk of harm.

When safeguarding concerns emerge, staff and managers do not respond effectively. For example, on two occasions, staff have received information about alleged sexual assaults on children, but they failed to act on this promptly and share the information with relevant professionals appropriately. This led to delays in investigating these disclosures and providing appropriate support to the children. Managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe, and this affects children's welfare.

The home's approach to safeguarding children who use the internet is inconsistent and for one child it is poor. For example, one child's use of the internet is not risk assessed, despite previous concerns about this child having an internet-enabled mobile phone. Consequently, safety measures are not in place to mitigate the risk of the child being exposed to inappropriate content and exploitation.

Managers have failed to ensure that the environment is maintained to a good and safe standard. Mould on the tiles in a child's en-suite bathroom had not been removed and a leak had left damp and mould on the ceiling in the room below. A child's bedroom furniture has been broken since February but has not been repaired, and a broken window has not been replaced. Some health and safety checks were not in date, which highlights shortfalls in management monitoring and oversight. Once this had been pointed out by the inspectors, managers addressed these issues immediately. Hazards in the physical environment of the home pose a risk to children's health and welfare. In addition, not carrying out repairs promptly does not help children to feel valued or to take pride in their home.

Staff have used physical intervention twice since the previous inspection to keep children safe. One record had not been completed in the required timescales and the staff were not spoken to about what had happened. The record for the second incident could not be found, despite being referred to in the six-monthly quality of

care review report completed by the previous manager. While incidents are rare, management oversight and learning from incidents that happen are weak.

On the whole, managers recruit staff safely and undertake relevant checks. On one occasion, a member of staff did not provide a full employment history. The manager took immediate action during the inspection to rectify this shortfall.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders' and managers' monitoring of the home is poor and ineffective. They have failed to identify shortfalls in safeguarding practice and in the quality of care provided to children. This has compromised children's safety and welfare.

The reports by the independent person have contained inaccurate information. For example, they stated that health and safety checks had been completed and were current when this was not the case. Gaps in external monitoring do not help to hold the provider to account and do not help to bring about improvements in the quality of care provided to children. In addition, monthly monitoring reports have not always been submitted to Ofsted within a reasonable timescale. This leaves the regulator without access to timely and factually correct information about what is happening at the home.

Managers do not notify Ofsted of all serious incidents in the home. This shortfall also leaves the regulator without essential information to enable them to monitor the home effectively.

Arrangements for staff supervision and appraisal are poor. Several staff have not had timely supervision over the last few months. When they have, supervisions are not reflective or used to support staff to improve their knowledge and understanding or their role. Furthermore, none of the staff has received a review of their performance within the last year. This means that staff do not fully understand their own progress and areas for development, or receive adequate guidance to support them in caring for the children and keeping them safe.

Leaders and managers have not kept the home's statement of purpose up to date. For example, updates to staffing are not included and a model of care that is no longer used is still included in the document. This gives misleading information to children, parents and carers, and professionals about the aims of the home.

The new manager has been in post since July 2022. Professionals were positive about the communication and support she provides. To support the development of the service, there have been recent changes to the management structure to improve oversight at the home. The new responsible individual and manager have started to address the shortfalls. These changes are in their infancy and their effectiveness is not yet clear.

As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued a compliance notice under regulation 12 (the protection of children standard).

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
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 positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(xiii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff revisit what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying incidents and that children receive appropriate support.	9 October 2022
*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—	9 October 2022

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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(vii)(b)) In particular, that safety plans around children's time away from the home are up to date and understood by staff and that children's use of the internet and social media is assessed.	
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the home is maintained well throughout to reduce hazards to children's health and well-being.	9 October 2022
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.	30 October 2022

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, ensure that systems are in place and effectively implemented to highlight and address shortfalls in the quality of care.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b)(ii))	9 October 2022
The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (“the statement of purpose”) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))	9 October 2022

Specifically, that up-to-date details of managers and staff in the home are reflected in records, and that training models are accurately followed.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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)(b)(c))	30 October 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—	30 October 2022

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This relates to ensuring that all incidents of restraint are recorded and reviewed in line with regulation.	
The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person’s report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)(7)(a)) Specifically, that the report details any safeguarding concerns relating to children and the actions taken to reduce these, and that the report is forwarded to Ofsted without unnecessary delay.	30 October 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, they must ensure that full Schedule 2 checks are undertaken. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2495967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Harmony Childcare Residential Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 38E Vanguard Way, Battlefield Enterprise Park,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3TG

Responsible individual: Lyndsay Miller

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

James Tallis, Social Care Inspector
Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector

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