# 2589537

Registered provider: Happy Group (uk) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned and managed children's home. It was registered in June 2020 to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been absent from the home since March 2021. Ofsted has now received the manager's voluntary cancellation.

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 the 20 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

**Inspection dates: 5 to 6 May 2021**

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| **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 are not protected or safeguarded. The care and experiences of some children are poor, and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** not previously inspected

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not previously inspected

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

# Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The experiences of children living in this home are mixed. One child has recently made progress. However, the staff have been unable to ensure that children are protected and experience a calm and nurturing environment in which to flourish.

There are no routines and boundaries in place that enable children to gain a sense of belonging and safety. Care plans are ineffective in addressing the emotional well-being of children by using strategies to respond to the presenting behaviours. This has led to a child moving on from the home as staff cannot meet the needs of the child. This means that the child's experience of this home is poor.

Staff have been unable to manage behaviour within the home or the community. Incidents of emotional upset are frequent, intense and last for a significant amount of time. Police are called to help in situations when staff feel that they cannot cope, which places children at risk of criminalisation. One member of staff said that they feel they are 'treading on eggshells' when dealing with incidents. This lack of a consistent approach to the care given to children results in a lack of trust and sense of belonging.

Physical interventions have taken place to manage behaviour. However, the records do not include all required information. Staff and children do not receive debriefs. This means that it is difficult to assess the appropriateness of such action. This does not allow the manager and staff team to identify areas for improvement or for the child to understand the reasons for the restraint.

Children do go missing from the home, although this has reduced in recent weeks. Staff respond by checking the local area and trying to contact children by phone. However, staff often do not know where a child is and follow-up actions are ineffective even when there are known high risks to the child.

Attendance and attainment in education settings is mixed. Staff support with schoolwork and revision but when children are not in education staff are not offering alternative activities to assist with learning.

Children enjoy some positive relationships with staff. A range of activities are on offer and children engage in these with staff. This helps to develop positive relationships. However, changes in staffing means that there is inconsistency in the care delivered. Staff have also been unable to meet the competing needs of children, which has led to incidents of anger as children struggle to manage their emotions in response.

The home is clean and tidy. However, there are signs of damage throughout the home. Some repairs have started but are not complete, with no clear timescales for completion. This lack of response means that children do not feel valued.

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

The provider has failed to ensure that staff have access to the children's current safety plans. The information contained in these plans is not cross-referenced by staff in the child's risk assessments. This has resulted in a vulnerable child being at significant risk of harm while out in the community.

Risk assessments are not always relevant and up to date. There is no clear evaluation of risk or effective strategies to reduce risk despite significant risks to children being known. This leaves children at risk of harm.

Staff have failed to educate and discuss significant safeguarding concerns with the children. Some significant and known risks, such as knife crime and gangs, have not been addressed by staff in key-work sessions. This places children at potential risk of harm and exploitation and fails to help them to learn to manage their own emotions or behaviour.

Children do not receive support to follow boundaries implemented by external agencies. For example, a community resolution order was in place for one child and despite the manager believing that failure to comply with this order may result in further police involvement, they failed to support the child to meet the restrictions. This exposed the child to the potential risk of criminalisation which may impact on the child's long-term plans to work in children's services.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted when there have been serious incidents on several occasions. This does not allow external scrutiny of the practice within the home to ensure that all actions have been taken to safeguard the children.

## The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There is currently no registered manager in the home. The provider failed to notify Ofsted that the registered manager had been absent for longer than 28 days and was no longer returning. The current acting manager has not had a thorough handover due to the circumstances. This has affected the oversight of the children's plans and the care that children receive.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the home registered in June 2020. Overall, the recruitment process is detailed and any known disciplinary action is discussed with staff and risk assessed prior to employment being offered. However, some reference checks for staff are not recorded. There is no evidence for at least two staff that references have been requested from a previous employer where staff have worked with vulnerable children. Other references on file are positive but this does not follow safer recruitment and may put children at potential risk of harm.

Not all staff have completed training necessary to meet the children's needs. Two of the staff have Level 3 qualifications but one of them is new to the home. Probationary staff have yet to undertake training in self-harm, knife crime or county lines despite these being relevant to the children's risks. The acting manager was unaware of this gap in knowledge until this was identified by the inspector. Staff do not have the knowledge or skills to understand these risks or support the children.

The manager has failed to ensure that children receive care from staff who are skilled and experienced to meet the children's needs. Probationary staff lead shifts with other staff who are also on probation. This is despite concerns regarding the staff members' ability to record the work undertaken with the children, including key-work discussions and planning for activities. The lack of clear recording could lead to safeguarding concerns as there is no clear record of the time spent with an individual child. This leaves both children and staff at risk.

The leaders and managers have not supported staff to work together in a consistent way. This has been further impacted by the confusing and lengthy documents relating to the children. Team meetings do take place, but minutes are not detailed and do not include the opportunity for reflection and learning for staff. The manager has failed to address known poor practice with staff. This gives no assurance that further poor practice will not occur or, if it does, that it will be addressed by the manager.

Supervisions have not been taking place in line with the provider's policy. Supervision records lack detail, in particular, in relation to the children's care, and do not provide staff with the development and support they need.

The monthly independent visitor has only visited the home once in the last six months due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. They have not consulted with the children and other stakeholders to gain their views about the home. This does not offer independent scrutiny of the home and has not identified the shortfalls in the management oversight.

The provider has not acknowledged or reviewed the regulation 44 reports, which limits their knowledge of the day-to-day practice within the home. The provider has relied on the verbal feedback from the manager without further triangulation as to the accuracy of information and how this affects the care to children.

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

## Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement | Due date |
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| The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—<br><br>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;<br><br>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.<br><br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—<br><br>ensure that staff—<br><br>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;<br><br>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;<br><br>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.<br>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(v)(vi))<br><br>This specifically relates to adapting how staff work and support children based on their individual needs. | 13 June 2021 |
| *The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.<br><br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br><br>that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if | 13 June 2021 |

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| necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;<br><br>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is risk of harm;<br><br>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;<br><br>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare<br><br>that the homes day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.<br>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) | |
| *The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—<br><br>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.<br><br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—<br><br>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;<br><br>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;<br><br>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;<br><br>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;<br><br>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;<br><br>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— | 13 June 2021 |

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| research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met;<br><br>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received;<br><br>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br><br>The registered provider must ensure that all staff have sufficient skills and knowledge to meet the specific needs of the children.<br>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) | |
| The care planning standard is that children—<br><br>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.<br><br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—<br><br>that arrangements are in place to—<br><br>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;<br><br>that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—<br><br>the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.<br>(Regulation 14 (1)(b) (2)(b)(iii)(e)(i))<br><br>This specifically relates to disruption meetings taking place prior to decisions to end placements for children. | 13 June 2021 |
| 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.<br><br>The registered person must—<br><br>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; | 15 August 2021 |

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| notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.<br>(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) | |
| The registered person must ensure that—<br><br>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—<br><br>the name of the child;<br><br>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;<br><br>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;<br><br>a description of the measure and its duration;<br><br>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;<br><br>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;<br><br>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure;<br><br>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;<br><br>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")—<br><br>has spoken to the user about the measure;<br><br>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate;<br><br>within five 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.<br>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) | 13 June 2021 |

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| The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—<br><br>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;<br><br>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;<br><br>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;<br><br>a child protection enquiry involving a child —<br><br>is instigated; or<br><br>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or<br><br>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) | 13 June 2021 |
| The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.<br><br>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—<br><br>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires;<br><br>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.<br><br>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3))<br><br>This specifically relates to visits being undertaken at the home and obtaining the views of parents and other appropriate professionals. | 13 June 2021 |
| If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children's home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous | 13 June 2021 |

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| period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence.<br><br>Except in the case of an emergency or unforeseen absence, a notice under paragraph (1) must—<br><br>in the case of the absence of the registered manager, the arrangements that have been, or are proposed to be, made for appointing another person to manage the home during the absence, including the proposed date by which the appointment is to be made. (Regulation 48 (1) (2)(b)(v)) | |

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure full recruitment and verification checks are completed, including the reason for leaving previous roles if this was working with children or vulnerable adults. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

## 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:** 2589537

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

**Registered provider:** Happy Group (uk) Limited

**Registered provider address:** West Walk House, 99 Princess Road East, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 7LF

**Responsible individual:** Ranjit Bains

**Registered manager:** Ruth Holmes

## Inspectors

Sue Hatton, Social Care Inspector
Tina Ruffles, Social Care Inspector
Debra Boldy, Social Care Inspector

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