

2617499

Registered provider: Harmony Residential Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties and children who have experienced trauma which has left them vulnerable.

There has been no registered manager since 31 October 2021.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 19 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home. One child has very recently moved on. There was one child living at the home at the time of this inspection. The managers and staff know the child well. The child says that they are happy living at the home and feel safe.

The turnover of staff and managers has been very high as has the use of staff from an agency. This means that children have not always received support from consistent and familiar adults who know their individual needs well. The provider and supporting manager from the sister home have recognised this and have successfully recruited a new team of staff to help bring stability. When agency staff have been used, thorough checks for suitability are made.

There has been inconsistency in seeking and acting on children's views, which has been compounded by leadership and staffing shortages. Children's complaints have been responded to properly. However, there have been long periods when key-work sessions have not taken place. This has meant that children have not always had dedicated time with adults to talk about important matters or concerns. The supporting manager has taken action so that key-work sessions are now held regularly.

Children lead healthy lifestyles that include outdoor activities with other local children. This has helped children to forge new friendships and feel secure in their community. Staff encourage children to eat a balanced diet, follow routines for mealtimes and enjoy sociable meals by eating with others.

Children make progress with education. Managers work proactively with other professionals to find school placements that meet children's needs.

Children take part in beneficial and enjoyable activities, including holidays and special days out, such as a rock concert. Children are encouraged to think about new opportunities to broaden their horizons and have been supported to find part-time employment.

The home is spacious and welcoming. Children are helped to personalise their own areas, which helps them to settle and feel included.

Staff who have worked at the home since it opened have forged positive relationships with children and care for them deeply. Staff talk warmly and kindly about children and their hopes for them. They want children to thrive while living at the home and recognise that improvements are needed.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There have been some incidents of children going missing from the home, although these have reduced significantly. However, staff have not always responded in line with the missing-from-care protocols to help find and return the child to the home as soon as possible. During one incident, the previous manager did not recognise the seriousness of the incident and the child's very high vulnerability. Following the incident, this failing was identified by the provider, who took immediate action to make the necessary changes to staff's understanding and responses.

The absence of consistent leadership combined with staffing pressures have adversely affected oversight of safety monitoring at the home. The home's fire risk assessment is overdue for review and the required checks of fire safety equipment and evacuation drills have been missed on several occasions. The provider identified a need to review local crime data each month to help inform risks to a child. However, the provider has not consistently carried out this review. A serious missing-from-home incident that required police involvement was not notified to Ofsted. The supporting manager has begun to address such shortfalls and is implementing new systems and oversight.

Not all staff are consistent in rewarding positive achievements and setting boundaries. Staff were not given the necessary standard of training to help them follow the home's therapeutic approach in positive behaviour support. Staff have not always followed the home's procedures for carrying out room searches. Failure to set clear expectations for children does not help them to manage their emotions and behaviour. The supporting manager has made improvements to training, mentoring and incentives for children to enable staff to encourage positive behaviour.

Children are making progress with learning new skills and improving their own safety. Staff are now helping children to develop independence and autonomy. Staff set expectations that promote safety when children are with their friends unsupervised.

Recruitment processes are robust and ensure that applicants are suitable to work with vulnerable children. Interviews with prospective staff explore how the applicant, if appointed, would treat children with kindness and respect. Agency staff are subject to the same checks as permanent staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There has not been a registered manager at the home since October 2021. This has had a negative impact on the development and progress of the home. When a new manager was recruited, this was short-lived and unsuccessful. They did not possess the required skills and experience for this type of home. An experienced manager from the sister home has been overseeing the management of this home since February 2022. She has begun to make improvements to the home and bring

stability. The manager's post has been offered to an existing staff member subject to suitability checks.

Leaders were slow to address the staffing shortages. There has been an over-reliance on agency staff who did not always have the skills and experience to meet children's needs well. Existing staff and leaders became tired and lost effectiveness.

The pressures faced by staff due to shortages were further affected by poor-quality induction, support and training. This, at times, led to differing views between staff on how children should be supported. Care plans did not provide clear direction for staff to follow. Team meetings did not take place for several months and supervision sessions to support staff were often missed.

Visits to the home by the independent person have not always included children's views. When children do not wish to speak to the independent person, other ways of gathering children's views have not been considered.

The responsible individual, with the support of the registered manager from the provider's sister home, has started to address the shortfalls. Together, they are making progress to improve and measure the quality of support that children receive.

Staff say that the supporting manager from the sister home is a positive role model to aspire to. They say that the supporting manager's knowledge and experience have been a stabilising influence for the home and for the retention of staff. Staff say that they feel energised and excited about the future for the home.

Professionals report very good working relationships with the responsible individual and staff. Regular team meetings now take place and include detailed discussions about children's progress.

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.

Requirements	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children receive personalised care from consistent staff who know their needs well. Ensure that children have regular access to staff to discuss their progress and emotional support needs.	31 August 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. 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;	30 September 2022

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)) In particular, ensure that the appointed manager has suitable skills and experience to lead and develop a team of staff to meet the needs of children and that the manager registers with Ofsted without delay.	
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that the home's fire risk assessment is reviewed and that evacuation drills take place in line with the provider's stated frequency.	31 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))	31 August 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	31 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. In particular, ensure that the location risk assessment includes regular reviews of local crime statistics in line with the home's risk mitigating strategies. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. In particular, ensure that the views of children and external professionals are consistently sought. ('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: 2617499

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Harmony Residential Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 155 Cross Road, Mawneys, Romford RM7 8EA

Responsible individual: Sajida Kiyanni

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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