

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 is registered to provide care for five children with behavioural difficulties or who have experienced trauma which has left them vulnerable.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2021.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 June 2021

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

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

This is the first full inspection since the home registered with Ofsted. Since then, three children have moved into the home and two children have left the home in an unplanned way. The home has recently been unsettled. There have been several significant incidents when the staff have called the police out because staff have been unable to manage these safely. These incidents have reduced the overall quality of children's experiences.

The matching of new children to other children already living at the home has been ineffective. Group impact risk assessments consider the children's compatibility. However, important information about the risks for one child was not shared by the placing authority in a timely way. In addition, the known risks for this child were not fully considered against the other children's vulnerabilities. Failure to ensure that impact risk assessments are thorough has resulted in poor group dynamics. This limits the staff's capacity to implement effective risk reduction strategies.

The home is spacious and well appointed. The children benefit from personalised bedrooms that are decorated in line with their preferences. However, significant damage caused during incidents has not been repaired and the first-floor hallway carpet is stained and worn. The management team has organised for the repairs to be completed but the repairs have been delayed beyond a reasonable timeframe. These detract from what is otherwise a well-decorated and pleasant home.

The staff help the children to express their views. Staff provide key-working meetings and house meetings. Key-worker meetings are responsive to the emerging needs of each child. These have enabled the children to understand their responsibilities and their impact on others.

The staff understand the importance of education. In the absence of formal education, the children undertook a range of meaningful courses. These included subjects around equality and diversity and expanded the children's wider knowledge. One child has started to access home tutoring.

The staff team is motivated, child focused and committed to providing children with positive experiences. The staff offer activities that enhance the children's interests and expand their social opportunities.

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

Safer recruitment processes are not consistently followed. There are agency staff who work alone during the night who have not had proper recruitment checks. The manager has not gained a full employment history, has not explored the gaps in

employment and has not had oversight of the references provided by agency staff. The current recruitment system fails to reduce the potential for inappropriate people to work at the home.

The staff have been unable to reduce risks to children. One child's risks of criminalisation and another child's risk of self-harm behaviours did not reduce. The staff have been unable to de-escalate challenging behaviours effectively, and as a result, the police have been called to the home to assist the staff. These events have resulted in children moving out of the home at short notice.

The location risk assessment clearly identifies the risks associated with the home's location. However, important crime statistics that could help reduce risks and an area identified are not included. This does not ensure that staff are fully informed about the risks in the area and that the potential concerns are effectively reduced.

Behaviour management plans focus on proactive strategies including incentive programmes that reinforce the children's positive behaviours. Proportionate sanctions are used as consequences. When physical interventions are necessary, they are used as a last resort to prevent harm. However, three of the sanction records and one physical intervention record were not evaluated by the manager. This lack of managerial oversight compromises the overall analysis available in these records.

The staff ensure that the missing-from-home procedures are effectively implemented. For one child, the risks of going missing from the home were reduced. Multi-agency working with the local police and the youth offending services helped to reduce the risks for this child.

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

The manager has the qualifications, experience and skills to manage the home. He recognises that there are areas that could be improved and wants to make the necessary improvements needed.

The staff have not completed some of the training that the organisation offers. Important training such as responding to incidents of self-harm has not been undertaken by the staff. In addition, training in suicide ideation has not been considered. This lack of training does not support the staff to meet the children's complex needs. Some of the staff are inexperienced in residential childcare. Combined with training gaps, this does not ensure that all staff have the necessary skills to understand the children's vulnerabilities.

The management team has failed to notify Ofsted about an allegation at the home. The information was shared with the designated officer. However, a failure to notify reduces Ofsted's ability to monitor the home and ensure that the children are safeguarded.

Staff meetings are well attended and maintain a focus on the children. The manager is well regarded by the staff team. The staff benefit from regular and reflective supervisions. The staff are positive about the support that they receive.

The manager is proactive in accessing external health services to meet the complex needs of the children. This helps the staff to focus on what is important for the children's development, health and welfare.

External professional feedback is positive, particularly in respect of good communication.

External monitoring visits by an independent person provide a good level of scrutiny to develop practice. This level of monitoring provides the manager with a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of the home.

Despite the number of shortfalls identified, the manager and responsible individual have taken some immediate steps to address these.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, ensure that all staff access the home's training in responding to self-harm and that training in suicide ideation is sourced and attended.	30 July 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	5 July 2021
The registered person may only— 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—	5 July 2021

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (2)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, ensure that agency staff have had the required checks prior to their deployment.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay— if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	5 July 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing, homely and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that any damage to the home is repaired in a timely manner. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair, and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. In particular, ensure that records include managerial oversight within the required timescales. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home. Specifically, ensure that the assessment is consistently informed by up-to-date crime statistics and emerging areas of identified concern. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 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: Craig Wallace

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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