

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC424759
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Harmony Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	11 Park Place, Leeds LS1 2RX

Responsible individual	Mark Raw
Registered manager	Janet Brisby
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC424759

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people, from their starting points, become significantly safer as a result of living at the home. Persistent behaviour, that previously posed high levels of risk to young people's emotional and physical welfare, either ceases altogether, or becomes infrequent.
- The high level quality of care given extends over many years for some young people. This longevity of placement gives stability and an established sense of belonging.
- The care given ensures that young people learn to value education and learning. They develop aspirations for their futures that were previously absent. From their starting points of non-school attendance, young people achieve both academically and socially..
- Young people grow in emotional resilience and confidence, and are better able to express their opinions and feelings in an acceptable way. They develop open and trusting relationships with the staff that support their growing sense of independence.
- Staff nurture and encourage young people's interests, and previously harmful activities are replaced with enriching experiences.
- Any risks or concerns are managed within a comprehensive, multi-agency forum. Staff work hard with young people to develop their insights into personal safety and their transition into young adulthood.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets 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 must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report'). The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff (Regulation 45 (1), (2)(a), (3), (4)(a), (5)).</p>	15 June 2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction, and that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience, and that they have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year (Regulation 33 (1)(a), (4)(b)(c)).</p>	15 June 2016
<p>13 The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring that documents relating to young people's progress and achievements are updated in a timely manner and are evaluative in nature, and that staff are clear as to the rules within the home, the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (2)(b) work as a team where appropriate (f) 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. 	30 June 2016

<p>12 The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to impact assessments being produced and disseminated among staff, and changes in supervision of young people being reflected in updated risk assessments, the registered provider must:</p> <p>(2)(i) 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</p>	<p>6 June 2016</p>
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. Each home must have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave.
- Staff should have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and should understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10). This is with particular reference to young people being consulted prior to changes being implemented in young people's rewards systems and day-to-day rules.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). This is with particular reference to the renewal of the carpet in the computer room.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and run. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional or behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
9 June 2015	Full	Outstanding
2 December 2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
6 August 2014	Full	Good
28 May 2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>Young people make excellent progress from their starting points. There is sustained and continued improvement in their lives through the care and attention that they receive from staff. The challenges and complexities of behaviours are met with patient and consistent responses from staff.</p> <p>Young people feel valued as individuals and their emotional growth and stability ensures that their life chances significantly improve. One independent reviewing officer (IRO) commented, 'X has made extremely good progress since being at the home. The risks have really, really reduced and she has made huge progress. She is settled and has made relationships. She is in a much stronger place than she was before.' Another IRO said, 'Y has come on amazingly well.'</p> <p>Young people willingly seek out the support and advice of staff. They can talk openly about their previous life experiences and the current difficulties they face. Through these trusted relationships, young people are given guidance and support to make increasingly positive decisions. As a result, relationships with family and friends improve and they negotiate the complexities of relationships with greater confidence. For example, one young person has successfully achieved positive overnight contact with family, whereas previously this relationship was fraught, with discord and lack of communication. The high level of support that young people receive, to maintain and improve contact with family members, confirms and strengthens their identities and senses of belonging.</p> <p>Young people's confidence and self-worth continuously improves and, as a result of this, they develop appropriate friendships with peers. For some young people, previous relationships were characterised by sexual exploitation and misusing drugs on a daily basis. One young person commented, 'The home has worked out for me, going to college and meeting people. I've changed in quite a lot of ways. I'm smarter and wiser now and I am taking my education seriously. I realise I needed to change and meeting new people has helped me.'</p> <p>Young people's health improves through good daily routines that staff establish and maintain. Young people take pride in their physical presentation and learn appropriate life-skills. They are given opportunities to enjoy a range of activities, such as beauty treatments, ice-skating, meals out, film nights and trips to the cinema. These enhance and promote their understanding of positive leisure time and having fun.</p>	

From young people's starting points of refusing to attend education, staff work incrementally with young people to enable them to build the confidence necessary to achieve. Staff continuously reinforce the importance of education, and fully support young people in discovering their strengths and interests. Staff liaise with education providers when young people start to struggle, and these difficulties are successfully resolved. All young people attend education and are achieving academically.

There is suitable planning for young people coming to join the home, and staff are highly sensitive and attuned to the change in dynamics and relationships. Staff fully understand how young people's experiences affect their communication and how these, in turn, affect their relationships with each other. Staff offer ongoing support and advice to help young people to positively resolve differences and to manage any disagreements. As a result, young people achieve an understanding and acceptance of each other. One social worker commented, 'Z can be very challenging and her behaviours have reduced. The fact that she is living with two other young people is a massive achievement. Previously we would never have been able to put her with another young person. It just shows how far along she has come.'

Individual key working and regular young people's meetings give formal opportunities for young people to express their views about the running of the home. Young people also have daily conversations with staff, and feel able to give their opinions in an open and informal way. On the whole, young people are clear about the boundaries and rules that are in place. However, recent changes in the rewards system were brought about without involving or consulting young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Staff understand well the circumstances and behaviours that put young people at risk. This is underpinned by a thorough understanding of their past adversities, strengths and vulnerabilities. Through appropriate supervision, support and advice, young people develop confidence and insight into making positive and healthy decisions. Over time, they learn to self-manage situations and make age-appropriate decisions.</p> <p>Young people feel secure living at the home. They say that they feel safe and are safe, and that bullying is not a feature of their relationships with other young people. They are able to identify members of staff with whom they have particularly warm and trusted relationships. Young people are further protected through robust recruitment procedures that ensure that they are cared for by</p>	

suitable adults.

Since the last inspection, there have been no physical interventions, missing from home incidents or concerns related to child sexual exploitation. Drug misuse has significantly reduced. Some young people, for whom use of social media and the internet were restricted due to the high level of risk, now have age-appropriate, unsupervised use of these mediums. The care offered by the staff to reduce these concerns has been effective.

Risk assessments underpin the work that staff do with young people to ensure that they remain safe. However, these have not been updated in a timely manner in relation to changes in the supervision of young people. In addition, there have not been written impact assessments for young people new to the home. This reduces staff insight into and understanding of the young people's risks.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The registered manager is suitably qualified, holding a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. She has many years of experience in the care of young people. She leads by example, and her presence is felt within the home. The manager is extremely committed to the progress of the young people and understands their needs thoroughly. Young people have a relationship with her based on trust and respect.</p> <p>The manager, however, had a prolonged period away from work that resulted in arrangements for cover. Through the dedication and hard work of staff, the day-to-day care of young people continued to meet their needs and ensure that their welfare and safety was promoted. However, supporting documentation, evaluation and processes were not completed in the manager's absence. The arrangements made by the provider were insufficiently robust.</p> <p>As a result of the weaknesses in cover, the manager's review of the quality of care has not been completed, nor sent to Ofsted as required by regulation. This omission reduces oversight and restricts future planning for the home. In addition, documents informing this review, such as young people's 'progress and achievement' files have not been updated and are not evaluative in nature. Audits of files in the manager's absence lacked rigour.</p> <p>During the manager's absence, formal supervision of staff did not take place with sufficient regularity to meet the home's supervision agreements, nor have all staff</p>	

benefited from annual appraisals. This weakens the support given to staff, their professional development and the timely challenge of practice. Young people considered that decision making on some requests was delayed and commented on the difference her return to work had made. The manager is aware of these weaknesses and has a plan in place to address these shortfalls.

Staff and the manager work effectively with other agencies. They ensure that information concerning the welfare of young people, and their successes, is disseminated to other professionals in a timely manner. One social worker commented, 'Communication is very good and they share the positives as well.'

The sharing of day-to-day information about young people between staff is thorough. This ensures that their daily progress and setbacks are understood and that appropriate support is given. Staff team meetings occur regularly, and young people's progress is a central part of these meetings. This ensures that the care given to the young people is relevant and consistent across all staff.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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