

1224663

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home which provides care for up to four children with emotional and social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were four children living at the home. No children have moved out of the home since the last inspection.

The home is led by a registered manager. All four children were seen throughout the inspection and three children contributed by sharing their views.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 2025

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	inadequate
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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: 11 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
06/03/2024	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
02/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Some parts of the home are not consistently well maintained, indicating shortfalls in the daily monitoring and cleanliness of the home. Staff routinely lock doors downstairs, such as the games room and the lounge, highlighting an implementation of restrictive practices. Some of these restrictions are not subject to regular review or oversight, limiting opportunities to assess the necessity or impact on children's freedom or independence.

Children's bedrooms have not been maintained to a safe and homely standard. Oversight has not been effective in ensuring children's environments remained safe, clean and welcoming.

Children have experienced a period of instability due to an inconsistent staff team. Staffing challenges have meant that children have not been provided with consistent care and support and, while children who met with the inspector shared that they like the staff who support them, the lack of continuity in care has contributed to a notable deterioration in the behaviour of three children.

Leaders and staff support children in building positive relationships with their parents and important people to them. Staff support children with their individual plans in place around this. This includes welcoming family members into the home. Children benefit from this collaborative approach as it supports a developing sense of identity.

One child has enjoyed a trip to Brighton with staff. Two children have plans for a holiday over the summer, which also includes spending some time with their parent. Positive experiences support children to create memories, which promotes children's personal and emotional well-being.

Children have appropriate plans in place for education. One child has recently achieved qualifications in mathematics and English, which has enabled them to progress to college in the next academic year. This is progress from their individual starting point.

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

Shortfalls in safeguarding practices have placed children at potential risk of harm. Ofsted was not notified of two serious incidents that occurred in the home. One incident involved potential fire-setting behaviour. Although the registered manager appropriately identified the risk and implemented a risk assessment following this incident, the measures outlined to mitigate this risk are not consistently being followed in practice. This compromises the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. The failure to report this event, along with the other significant incident, demonstrates a lack of robust

oversight. This also limits external scrutiny, which impacts on the ability of the regulator to monitor safeguarding concerns effectively.

During a recent medical emergency, children witnessed staff needing to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Following the event, leaders did not take sufficient steps to ensure children were provided with robust emotional support and update individual risk assessments, indicating a lack of robust safeguarding and risk management procedures.

Children have not yet been helped to understand the impact and seriousness of using racist language. On occasions, this language has been directed towards staff and, in one instance, towards a member of the public, resulting in police involvement. The impact of support to help children understand and change their behaviours has been limited, impacting the ability to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all.

When children go missing from the home, staff look for children. However, conversations are not consistently held with children to explore the reasons why they may go missing from home. Return home interviews are also not consistently undertaken. There is a lack of management oversight of incidents when children go missing from home. This limits opportunities to identify patterns and implement effective safeguarding responses.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Staff do not feel confident in managing the children's behaviours. As a result, the police have been called several times. These weaknesses in behaviour management have had an adverse impact on children's emotional well-being and limited their progress.

The manager has spent a period away from the home. Although there was management cover arranged during this time, it was not consistent for staff or children. Children felt particularly unsettled during this period and there was an escalation in behaviours from children that challenged staff. The absence of consistent leadership during this time negatively impacted children and staff.

There was a significant incident at the home when cover staff were caring for the children. This was an extremely challenging incident which escalated over several hours, and staff were unable to manage the environment effectively or provide appropriate support to the children. This incident involved a serious assault on staff by three children, a police call-out and the children going missing. Despite staff contacting the on-call manager, no senior support arrived until approximately seven hours later. This highlights serious weaknesses in the on-call and crisis response arrangements. There was a lack of support and guidance during this incident, which negatively impacted children and staff.

On one occasion, when children made an allegation against a staff member, managers took initial steps to review the matter and share information with safeguarding partners. However, records did not clearly set out the rationale for concluding that no internal

investigation was required, or how leaders assured themselves that children's concerns were fully addressed.

Staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the home's stated expectations. This includes less experienced members of staff, as well as those in more senior support worker positions in the home. This falls short of the home's stated aim.

There are shortfalls in safer recruitment practices. For example, there was a gap in working history for one member of staff which had not been explored. This undermines effective safeguarding practices.

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, The 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— 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 work as a team where appropriate; 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;	8 September 2025

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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) This specifically refers to ensuring that management oversight of the day-to-day running of the home is vigilant and that there are robust quality assurance and monitoring systems in place which are regularly used and recorded. This also relates to leaders and managers ensuring that staff who are caring for children are confident delivering the care they need. This includes staff having the appropriate skill set to help children in times of crisis. This also relates to ensuring that professional curiosity is applied when analysing children's behaviours and what they are trying to say. This also relates to ensuring that staff are sufficiently supported by leaders and managers on a day-to-day basis and also in crisis situations.	
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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;	8 September 2025

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)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(b)(d)) In particular, children should be afforded an environment which is physically safe and which supports their well-being. Risk management plans need to be inclusive of all risks for children. Leaders and managers need to have systems in place to assure themselves that staff are being vigilant in measures which have been put in place to ensure children's safety, for example ensuring that dangerous items such as lighters are removed when seen, which is in line with risk assessments.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; and an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(xi)) In particular, children should be helped to manage behaviours before the point of escalation and crisis in order to prevent assaults and injuries of staff.	8 September 2025

This also relates to the need to help children to understand the implications and seriousness of racist language. This also relates to ensuring that staff have an appropriate skill set to help children to regulate difficult emotions before the point of escalation.	
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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)) This relates to children’s bedrooms not being well maintained in a way which supports their needs and helps them reach their full potential.	8 September 2025
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)) This relates to restrictive practices that are currently used in the home, with no regular review or justification, such as locking of some doors.	8 September 2025

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (e)) This relates to the two incidents that have not been notified to Ofsted.	8 September 2025
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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: 1224663

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: 17 Wolverhampton Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1AP

Responsible individual: Daniel Goldie

Registered manager: Andrea McKinder

Inspector

Becky Thompson, Social Care Inspector

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