

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Unique reference number	1235654
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Horizon Care and Education Group Limited
Registered provider address	Venture House, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LG

Responsible individual	Ann-Cheri Callow
Registered manager	Andrea McKinder
Inspector	Phillip Morris

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children's and young people's welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

1235654

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is inadequate because:

- Young people are not receiving the help and support they need to participate in further education, training or employment. This hampers their future prospects.
- Staff members' understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities is a weakness. This has led to young people being placed in vulnerable positions.
- The kitchen area and young people's bathrooms present as tired and worn.
- Young people's access to parts of the home has been unnecessarily restricted because staff have locked internal doors without proper consideration. This practice also raises additional concerns about safe evacuation in the event of a fire.
- Young people's placement and risk management plans are of a poor quality and are not reviewed regularly. Additionally, young people are not sufficiently involved in the decisions made about them.
- The manager failed to ensure that Ofsted was notified of an incident, that they deemed significant, in a timely manner. This limited Ofsted's ability to monitor the home effectively.
- Management arrangements remain of concern. The registered manager is on long-term sick leave and arrangements have not been made to cover the duration of her anticipated absence.
- There has been a high turnover of staff in recent months. This has had a disruptive effect upon young people's relationships with the staff caring for them.

The children's home's strengths

- Incidents involving physical intervention are managed well. The staff, when required to use such interventions, follow prescribed methods to minimise the likelihood of injury. The manager reviews such incidents to ensure that procedures are followed correctly.
- Staff members receive regular supervision and appraisal. The staff team, although quite new, has regular team meetings leading to improved communication and a better understanding of what needs to improve to support young people fully.

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(s) 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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must: (b) ensure that staff: (vii) provide children living at the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably.	27/01/2017
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard (1) In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, children should receive care from staff who: (c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting children's care and welfare in their lives.	27/01/2017
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard, the registered person should ensure: (a) that staff: (ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment.	27/01/2017
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person should ensure: (a) that staff: (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered manager.	27/01/2017
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person to:	27/01/2017

(a) 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.	
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard children should: (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	27/01/2017
The registered person must ensure that any limitations placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review; and allows children as much freedom as possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	27/01/2017
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must: provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of a fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(b))	27/01/2017
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 (4)(e))	27/01/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home can provide care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A	N/A	N/A

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
The young people living in this home are not making progress in some crucial areas of their development. Overall, their experience is inadequate because they are not receiving the services they require, or sufficient support from the staff to make progress. The manager and staff members' understanding of their roles in relation to protecting young people is not good enough and this has exposed young people to risk. Young people are not making enough progress in their education or training. One young person has no provision in place for either further education, training or employment. The young person has been resistant to undertaking further education or training. This resistance has been met with weak and inconsistent staff responses. Another young person had previously made good progress when at school and achieved good GCSE results. However, the manager and staff were not able to support her to consolidate this progress when she transferred to college. Her attendance dropped to between 50% and 60% and now she has left the course. The manager and staff have no contingency plan for the young person. There is confusion between the staff and social worker regarding her plans for education or training. These young people's days are unstructured and, during this inspection, they spent a great deal of time in their rooms and in bed. They are missing peer and social interaction and not realising their potential. This will limit opportunities in later life and negatively affect their self-esteem and confidence. The young people do not benefit from living in a well-maintained environment. The kitchen units are in a poor condition; they have damaged handles and worn work surfaces. Young people's bathrooms present as dated with tiles and grouting that shows signs of mould and rust around taps. The bathrooms have a great deal of condensation and the bathroom units look tired. These areas present as dilapidated and detract from the overall impression of the home. Staff do not have access to accurate, detailed, and up-to-date placement and risk-management plans. Plans are of poor quality and contain inaccurate, out-of-date information. Plans do not encapsulate the young people's education and training needs. They do not include effective strategies to support young people to achieve good educational outcomes. Additionally, the plans lack detailed information about contact arrangements between young people and their family and friends. These plans have not received oversight by the manager or the wider staff team, and are not revised following significant events. Plans do not take into account the views, wishes and feeling of young people or their ideas regarding the care they receive. These plans fail to provide staff with clarity and guidance in meeting young	

people's needs.

Arrangements for family contact are variable. One young person has positive experiences. The staff have supported the young person with regular, activity-based contact and the parent often visits the young person at the home. Other young people do not enjoy such positive experiences: arrangements for family contact are either erratic or are not taking place. One young person regularly visits a parent against the expressed wish of the social worker and staff, who deem this to be unsafe. The manager has not worked with other agencies and the young people to develop a coherent plan to progress safe contact arrangements.

Young people's health needs are a priority for the manager and staff. All young people receive the services of primary health care professionals. Routine appointments at the GP, dentist and opticians take place. Some young people smoke and have used cannabis. The staff have completed individual work with young people to raise awareness of the hazards to their health of such behaviours. This has achieved limited success. Young people continue to smoke, and the staff are unsure about the level of smoking and cannabis use. Staff benefit from advice and guidance provided by the organisation's psychologist. The psychologist attends meetings at the home and offers staff good advice. Staff members also report that they are able to access telephone advice from the psychologist. This supports them to meet the psychological and emotional needs of young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The manager and staff are not safeguarding young people effectively because they do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting young people. Their understanding of the risks to young people is weak. For example, they transported a young person in the early hours of the morning to their family home to care for a younger sibling following an incident of domestic violence. The staff did not understand that this was an inappropriate situation in which to place a young person. Furthermore, the staff and manager failed to realise that this amounted to a significant incident. Consequently, the recording was of poor quality and no follow-up action was taken. Staff lock internal doors, preventing young people from accessing all areas of the home. The doors leading to and from the kitchen, and to the lounge are often locked during the night. For one young person, whose room is at the rear of the home, this means that she has no access to staff should she require support or assistance at night. Additionally, at the rear of the building, there are insufficient means of escape in the event of fire or emergency. Managers addressed this	

significant shortfall immediately.

Young people have not been safe because of involvement in some significant incidents in the community. These incidents have resulted in police taking action against young people. Staff do not always know the whereabouts of young people when they go out in the evening, or who they spend time with. This hinders their ability to promote positive and socially acceptable behaviour and divert young people from harmful behaviours.

Staff efforts to reduce the frequency of missing from care incidents are hampered by the fact that young people have long periods of unstructured time and have few meaningful interests. However, the manager and staff are aware of the particular risks to young people who go missing from care. When young people have gone missing the staff will search for them and continually try to contact them via mobile phones. They also contact known associates in order to discover their whereabouts. Staff will alert the relevant authorities. The staff record their actions and efforts are made to locate young people. When young people have returned home, interviews take place to try to ascertain where they have been. In many instances, young people will not divulge where they have been or who they have been with.

The manager and staff have had to resort to using physical intervention to manage behaviour on some occasions. The use of such interventions has been carried out proportionately and to prevent harm to the young person or others. The staff have recorded such interventions appropriately and there is evidence that the manager has reviewed and evaluated such incidents. Additionally, young people's views are obtained to try to extract learning from the incident to prevent recurrence. Staff receive training and development in order to carry out such interventions in a safe manner to prevent harm to all involved.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
There is insufficient clarity about management arrangements at the home. The registered manager is on long-term sick leave. An interim manager is in post but the length of his tenure is unclear as he is due to register a new service for the organisation. The acting manager is unsure of the length of time he will be leading the service. This uncertainty is impeding the development of the home. Management arrangements are currently weak. The current acting manager has been in post for a relatively short period. A locality manager, who is additionally managing her own service, managed the home prior to his arrival. The	

management weaknesses identified at this inspection are:

- Poor oversight of crucial documents, such as young people's plans. This means that key target dates have elapsed and objectives are not reviewed.
- The manager has failed to recognise when a significant incident has taken place. As a result, necessary actions were not taken. In addition, the manager has not ensured that Ofsted is notified of significant issues in a timely manner.
- The management failed to recognise that a young person's access to all parts of the home was restricted by locked internal doors or the ensuing fire risk implications.

Young people have experienced instability in the staff team which cares for them. There has been a high turnover of staff. One young person made the following comments about the staff team: 'They don't care', 'They have a go at me', and 'I can't speak to staff.' A social worker confirmed the recent instability with the staff group. However, this new staff team is working hard and making efforts to build positive relationships with young people. One relatively newly appointed senior staff member has tried to encourage young people to become involved with charitable work in the community, as he recognises that young people will benefit from doing good things for others.

Staff members receive regular supervision by the manager or senior staff. Supervision sessions take place each month. This enables the member of staff to discuss matters that are important to them. They discuss the young people in some depth, and how they are caring for them. Staff members can discuss their developmental and training needs and how any identified gaps in training could be addressed. Staff members have the required qualification for working with young people in residential care or are attending training programmes to attain the qualification. Regular professional supervision, together with training and development, will assist this relatively new staff team to become established and this will help young people to make progress.

The staff team is developing relationships and identifying where improvements are required. They are meeting regularly. This is supporting them to improve their communication as a team and helping them to establish working relationships. At a recent team meeting, areas for improvement were identified. The team recognised as a group that young people spending excessive time in their bedrooms and in bed was not acceptable and that they need to make concerted efforts to rectify this.

The manager benefits from regular scrutiny by an independent visitor. These visits occur monthly and the visitor provides a report on the strengths and areas for improvement. The independent visitor has identified areas of weakness in the service. Unfortunately, these areas were not rectified in a timely manner and remained areas of weakness at this inspection.

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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