

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	31/01/2017
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	31/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1235654

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The new acting manager took timely and decisive action to rectify the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. This has led to rapid improvement, which has resulted in young people now receiving a good service.
- Young people's future prospects are improved because the staff ensure that all young people are in education or training. The young people benefit from structured days, and have meaningful educational plans that will help them succeed in the future.
- The physical environment of the home is undergoing significant improvement. This means that young people will live in a home they can be proud of and enjoy.
- Young people are now safer. The manager and staff have made considerable progress in preventing young people going missing from care. Significant and concerning events are now managed robustly and in line with agreed multi-agency procedures. Relevant agencies are notified immediately.
- The young people can now access all parts of their home. They can easily access staff members, and there is adequate means of escape in the event of emergency.
- Interim management arrangements, until the return of the registered manager, have been settled. This provides clarity for the young people and the staff team.
- Young people are benefitting from a stable staff team. The staff receive regular professional supervision and guidance. This enhances their work with young people.

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

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance and supplement that provided by their school through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2016	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The last full inspection identified shortfalls in all the judgement areas. The home was required to take action to ensure that they complied with nine regulations. Significant progress in meeting the requirements set at the last inspection has been made. The improvement is striking, and has been achieved through a significant amount of work by the new acting manager and staff. This improvement means that the overall experience of residents is now good. Young people now benefit from improved care plans that reflect high expectations for achievement. The acting manager overhauled all previous care and placement plans. They now set out clear actions required to help young people make progress. These actions have unambiguous timescales, and provide clarity on the delegation of responsibilities and criteria for evaluation. The views of young people are routinely sought on their care plans. This helps to encourage young people to invest in these plans, and makes achievement more likely. The staff understand their roles and responsibilities in driving plans forward because the new acting manager has provided clear and decisive direction. All young people now have education or training in place. This was a key priority for the acting manager when coming into her post. One young person, who was not in any form of education or training at the last inspection, is now attending a training programme, equipping her with skills and support to move into college or take on an apprenticeship. The young person benefits from a more structured day, and is looking forward to undertaking a work experience placement in the near future. The social worker for the young person commented, 'Things are much clearer; I am really pleased with the progress made. The right people make the difference.' Another young person attends a local school, has much improved attendance and is making progress. Her confidence is improving as a result of joining a stage school and she is working hard to obtain a role in a production. Young people now have a sense of direction, ambition and confidence in their abilities. The new acting manager quickly understood the risk to young people emanating from uncertain contact arrangements with their families. The manager has now ensured that contact arrangements are robust. Meetings were quickly arranged with social workers, and plans for contact reviewed, amended and made more effective. This action has diverted young people from taking matters into their own hands and leaving the home on an unauthorised basis to visit family members. A key priority for the manager and staff is the health and well-being of young	

people. To achieve this, the manager and staff ensure that young people are registered with primary healthcare professionals and receive annual health assessments. Young people now have updated healthcare plans containing actions for staff to ensure young people remain healthy. Young people requiring therapeutic help with their emotional and mental health have now been referred to specialist agencies. However, one young person smokes, and her plan does not sufficiently detail how staff will help her to give up.

The manager and staff have made significant progress in listening to the views of young people. Weekly meetings take place that enable young people to provide their views on the care they receive. The manager reviews feedback, provides her comments and acts on the wishes and feelings of young people when possible. This means young people can now be certain their views are important to the manager.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The new acting manager took immediate, firm and effective action to rectify the shortcomings identified at the last inspection. These shortcomings included young people going missing from care regularly, and a poor staff response to significant incidents. Additionally, young people were prevented from accessing all parts of the home through the locking of internal doors at night. The manager has ensured that doors are not locked and that young people can access all areas of their home. She has also ensured that young people now have adequate means of escape in an emergency, such as fire. The manager has ensured that training has taken place so that staff can respond better to significant incidents. Notifications to safeguarding agencies and Ofsted of significant incidents are now made immediately. Significant improvement has been made to the physical environment of the home. At the last inspection, the kitchen area and bathrooms were in poor condition. Work is now taking place to install a new kitchen, and new bathroom fittings. A complete redecoration, including greater personalisation of young people's bedrooms, is also taking place. The young people have been actively involved in buying new items for the home, and look forward to the work being finished. Consequently, young people will benefit from a comfortable and modern home they can be proud of, reflecting their own tastes. The safeguarding practice of staff has improved. They understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Risk assessments and risk-management plans for young people are discussed with staff, and the manager has introduced reflective discussions in team meetings. This both enhances and	

develops staff knowledge and skills. Staff understand the organisation's safeguarding policy, and they understand what action to take when faced with a safeguarding concern. This improvement in knowledge and practice will help to keep young people safe.

Young people being away from the home and missing was of great concern at the last inspection. This has improved to such an extent that there have been no missing from care episodes since the last inspection. This improvement has been achieved through ensuring that young people have more structured activities and attend education regularly. The arrangements for contact between young people and their families are improved, which prevents young people visiting family members outside agreed arrangements. Because young people's day-to-day experiences and life at the home are enriched, they do not go missing.

The staff manage the behaviour of young people well. Young people receive good encouragement and support to improve their behaviour. At times when the behaviour of young people has fallen below the expectations of staff, individual work takes place to understand the reasons for this. Staff provide alternative ways for young people to express frustration or anger. Since the last inspection, there have been two incidents of physical intervention. These interventions took place in accordance with procedure, and were required to keep the young person and others safe. Staff have received training in the use of physical intervention to reduce the risk to young people and others. Behaviour-management plans have improved and now detail the behavioural history of young people, potential triggers, and warning signs of negative behaviours. They also include strategies for staff to employ in dealing with challenging behaviours.

The acting manager has taken rigorous and effective action in response to significant events. There have been some incidents of concern since the last inspection, including an allegation against a member of staff. These incidents have been addressed in accordance with procedures, and staff have taken quick and robust action. The manager and staff fully understand and implement procedures designed to keep young people safe.

The location of the home is risk-assessed to ensure young people live in a safe and secure community. This assessment, completed in collaboration with the local police and partner agencies, identifies any potential risk factors to young people emanating from the local area. The manager takes effective action to ensure that any risk factors are addressed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of	Good

leaders and managers

Management arrangements were not clear at the last inspection. The registered manager was away from the home on long-term absence. A temporary manager, who did not know how long they would be at the home, was in day-to-day charge of the service. This has now been resolved, with a manager appointed until the registered manager returns. The new manager has been rigorous and decisive in transforming the ethos of the home. She took rapid and effective action to respond to the shortfalls found at the previous inspection.

- The home has been refurbished.
- The views, wishes and feelings of young people are now obtained through a variety of means, and inform the care provided to the young people by the staff.
- The young people are all now in education or training and making progress.
- The staff fully understand their roles and responsibility in keeping young people safe.
- The manager has overhauled the placement plans, care plans and behaviour-management plans. These are now up-to-date and accurately set out the care that young people need in order to thrive.
- The young people can now access all communal areas of their home. The manager has ensured that there are adequate means of escape in the event of fire or emergency. The organisation's health and safety officer has approved the measures taken by the manager.
- The manager has ensured that incidents deemed as significant are reported to Ofsted immediately. She understands the importance of timely notification. She ensures that incidents are managed transparently and in accordance with policy, procedure and regulation.

Young people benefit from a stable and sufficiently resourced staff team. There are currently no vacancies. Staff receive guidance and oversight from the manager, together with regular professional supervision. Staff report that the manager provides an 'open door' to discuss any issues they may bring. The staff now meet on a regular basis. This has helped to improve staff relationships, and communication. A member of staff stated, 'Everyone in the staff team brings something different to the home. There are good relationships and we are coming together well.'

Partnership working with other agencies is now good. For example, there are regular meetings with local authority social workers, education providers and leaving care support workers. The manager has advocated on behalf of young people when she believes the responses of other agencies have been substandard or when communication has fallen below expectation. She understands the crucial importance of working proactively with partner agencies.

The manager has developed a systematic approach to monitoring the quality of care provided to young people. She receives monthly reports from an independent visitor who scrutinises the services provided. Additionally, the manager is reviewing all documents produced by the staff team to ensure that they are of the highest quality. She reviews all incidents that have taken place and carries out her own monthly auditing.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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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