

1241789

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 home is owned by a large private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make good progress in all areas of their lives. They attend school regularly and they want to learn.
- Staff ensure that young people's health needs are met. Young people understand their health needs, and know that staff will support them.
- Young people feel able to express their views, wishes and feelings to staff. Young people are confident about raising any concerns they may have and they receive a prompt response from staff to any complaints made.
- Staff understand the complex needs of young people and treat them as individuals. They celebrate their successes and advocate for them at all times.
- Young people learn how to look after themselves. Staff encourage and support them to learn how to cook, budget and prepare for independence.
- Young people feel supported to engage in local social activities. They also get to spend time with their families and friends. Staff support them emotionally and practically to ensure that such relationships are made and maintained.
- Young people feel safe, and believe that staff do all they can to protect them from harm.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Managers need to ensure that placing authorities provide key information relating to young people. This includes the assessments, reports and plans that assist in planning for their care.
- Case records present as confusing and out of date. Staff and managers need to put in place a more robust system for auditing, reviewing and amending records. This will assist young people who may wish to read their files.
- Managers need to ensure that they fully consider and learn from internal and external monitoring systems and reports. More analysis and evaluation of areas such as missing from care would assist them in improving services and the support provided.
- Managers need to ensure that if a young person goes missing, they are always offered an independent return home interview by their placing authority. This would also assist managers in understanding the reasons for missing incidents, and reducing the frequency of such incidents.
- Better recording systems would assist staff and managers in evidencing how the views, wishes and feelings of young people have been heard and acted upon.

Recent inspection history

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

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
If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c)) This is with reference to the need to ensure that assessment reports and plans are chased up and obtained from the placing authority for each child, and placed on their records.	05/03/2018

Recommendations

- Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

This is with reference to management analysis and evaluation of regulation 45 reports, team-meeting actions, consultation with young people and the home's development plan.
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see

the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people present as happy, relaxed and confident. Over time, young people form positive attachments to staff and to managers, and they receive good care and support. Young people understand that staff will support them in all areas of their lives. One young person said: 'I would score this home nine out of 10. I am happy here.'

Young people attend school regularly and see the value of education and learning. Staff act as positive advocates for them. Staff will challenge education providers to ensure that young people receive the support they need, and receive their entitlement to education.

Young people engage in the local community and take part in community events. Staff support them to use local resources, such as gyms, swimming pools, shops and cinemas. Staff also support young people to have free time alone in the community. This enables young people to increase their independence and develop a sense of belonging in the community. It also reflects the need for young people to take age-appropriate, managed risks.

Staff support young people to keep in touch with, and to visit, their families and friends. This includes visits that are some considerable distance from the home. Young people value being able to keep in touch with significant people in their lives, and feel that staff support them to do so.

Staff include young people in discussions about their care and their plans. There is an open and transparent approach by managers with regard to ensuring that young people feel fully involved in all aspects of their care. Recently, there have been changes of staff and managers in the home. Young people have been fully briefed by senior managers about these changes. This enables them to ask any questions they may have, and to feel valued and secure.

Formal meetings with young people have not taken place since November 2017. It is clear that young people feel able to express their views, wishes and feelings with staff. However, there is a need to ensure that clear processes are in place for consultation and engagement. This would enable young people to see how their views and wishes are considered and acted upon, reducing the risk of frustration. It would also provide clarity on how young people influence the running of the home and the plans for developing and improving the home.

Staff support young people to understand their own health needs, and to take steps to meet those needs. Routine and specialist healthcare support is made available to young people. The recording of health information requires improvement as it is not always clear if health appointments have been attended, or what the outcomes were.

Menu planners need to reflect the actual meals eaten by young people each week, and how they have influenced the menu planning.

The placement plan for one young person needs reviewing and updating to reflect the outcome of actions set last year.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people feel safe and feel protected from harm. Staff understand their individual and complex needs, and respond accordingly. Staff are not risk-averse. They will assess risks and decide if a young person can safely have free time in the local community. This reflects the staff's commitment to enabling young people to learn through taking age-appropriate, well-managed risks, where they can make any mistakes safely.

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant period of missing-from-care incidents. During these incidents of young people being missing from the home, staff have taken all of the necessary action, and have worked closely with the police and placing authorities. Lessons have been learned from this period, as it became evident that a key factor related to young people being placed at a distance from their homes, and their desire to return to those areas. In response, managers took appropriate action to ensure their safety and well-being.

The recording of missing-from-care incidents is clear and detailed. It reflects a staff team whose members are confident about their roles and responsibilities. A shortfall has been identified in relation to independent return home interviews. These are not taking place routinely and this is a missed opportunity to gain information to assist managers in analysing and evaluating risk.

The use of physical intervention is minimal in this home. The last incident took place in August 2017. Records of physical intervention indicate that staff are taking appropriate action to ensure the safety of the young people and others. A shortfall was identified at the last inspection around the recording of restraints. Managers have worked to ensure that staff recording is clear and detailed. The records also include details of the debrief meetings that take place with the young people and the involved staff members. Staff have commendable insight into and understanding of the emotions being expressed through young people's behaviour. Staff respond to young people in a sensitive and supportive manner. Staff utilise a range of strategies in order to help individual young people to consider and learn from their previous risky behaviours, and to keep them safe. They praise young people for making improvements in how they respond to situations. Young people grow in confidence and feel able to manage their own behaviour in a much more effective way.

Recruitment and selection processes are robust, and prevent unsuitable people from being recruited to work in this home.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in management and staffing. There is no registered manager in post. Interim management arrangements have been put in place and a registered manager from another of the company's homes is providing part-time cover. A new manager has been appointed, and is due to commence in post in the near future. A large number of permanent staff have left over the past year.

The responsible individual is very aware of how these changes have impacted on young people and the remaining staff. An action plan is in place to support the young people and staff. This is positive and reflects proactive management of this home. The interim manager is well regarded by staff and young people. She is providing clear management oversight and support in this interim period. Young people are fully aware of the changes. They understand why the changes are taking place and what the plans are for the home.

Senior managers continue to recruit to permanent vacancies at the home. Some new staff are now in post and others are due to start in the near future. The use of bank staff is providing consistency of care for the young people. Managers have been keen to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible for young people. Staff themselves report that it has been an unsettled time at the home, but they are confident about the recent staff appointments, and feel supported by the interim management arrangements.

Staff receive regular supervision, annual appraisals and training. The interim manager and the deputy manager have systems in place to ensure that staff receive the support they need. A wide range of training and development opportunities are available to staff. Managers ensure that staff training remains up to date, for example training in first aid and restraint. This ensures that the home has a competent and suitably skilled workforce.

Management monitoring and oversight of the home require improvement. Internal management reports are more descriptive than evaluative. This is particularly evident in relation to the increase in missing-from-care incidents reported last year. Managers need to use information to improve their understanding of the care provided, and evaluate the possible reasons for an increase in the risks posed to young people, such as the increase in incidents of young people missing from care.

The development plan for the home needs to be updated to include the recently implemented management action plan. This will help managers to evaluate the improvements planned in the home.

Case records present as confusing and difficult to follow. They do not provide clarity about young people's care or about their plans, and will not be helpful to young people if they decide to access these records in the future. There is no current auditing system in place to ensure that records are considered, reviewed or updated.

Young people express their wishes, views and feelings openly with staff. However, there is a lack of formal recording of the responses of young people. One young person has asked to have a new bed. There is no clear agreement or plan in place for responding to this request. This leads to confusion and frustration for the young person. Young people need to know that there is a process, and need to be able to see how their views have been considered and acted upon by staff and managers.

Two shortfalls which were identified at the last inspection led to recommendations being made. These related to the recording of physical restraints, and reflecting on how the views of young people are sought and acted upon. One of these recommendations has been made again, in relation to improving how managers respond to the views of young people.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1241789

Provision sub-type: 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: Emma Green

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tracy Murty: social care inspector

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