

1249183

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is a privately owned children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

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

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

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: 18 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home has been subject to one compliance notice that was issued in relation to the protection of children standard. This notice was not met at an earlier inspection and requirements were raised.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- There has been a period of instability in the leadership of the home. The work undertaken to ensure that children and young people are appropriately safeguarded and their complex needs are clearly understood remains untested.
- A permanent manager has only recently been appointed and has yet to take up his position within the company. The manager will need a period of time to assimilate into the role and complete the registration requirements.
- Leaders have not sufficiently assessed risks of harm to young people and taken account of this in planning their care and in their admission to the home. This has resulted in unsafe practice and a lack of consistent care.
- The impact of the improvements made in addressing the requirements made at the last inspection is untested as no young people are currently residing at the home.

The children's home's strengths:

- The interim manager has been addressing and executing the changes required to meet the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.
- New members of staff have been appointed and are receiving an extended induction programme. Existing staff have received enhanced training in safeguarding and child sexual exploitation.
- The manager and staff have set the foundation for developing positive links with local services and partner agencies. Channels of communication have been facilitated to promote the safety and well-being of young people.
- Reflective and retrospective learning has been undertaken with the staff team to improve the quality and individualisation of the range of care-planning documentation and in the completion of impact assessments.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2017	Full	Inadequate

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who – take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7(1)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff talk to young people about moves to alternate placements and allow them to discuss their views and concerns.	31/01/2018
The positive relationship standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on – mutual trust and respect; an understanding of acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard at paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – that staff help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(a)(ii))	31/01/2018
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 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. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that care plans and risk assessments are up to date and valid. Ensure that the care provided by staff is well informed and consistent.	31/01/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that –	31/01/2018

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 the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(b)(d)(e)(f))	
The care planning standard is that children – receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that arrangements are in place to – ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b) and (2)(b)(i)) In particular, ensure that welcome procedures are in place for new young people arriving at the home. When young people are moving, they should be reassured by staff and given the opportunity to discuss their views.	31/01/2018

Recommendations

- 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)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are

satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, two out of the three young people living in the home experienced unplanned placement moves and their experience of living at the home was characterised by inconsistent and unsafe practice. One young person, whose placement was disrupted through this chaotic period, did have a more planned transition from the home. Her worries and anxieties were clearly understood and acted on by the interim manager and the staff who were more attuned to her complex needs and level of cognitive functioning.

Currently, there are no young people living at the home. There has been an interim manager in post, some staff have left and others have been dispersed to cover shifts at other homes. A new manager has been appointed to the home but at the time of this inspection had not commenced his employment. New staff have also been appointed and there is now a core staff team focused and ready to receive new admissions to the home. The environment and culture in the home are more settled than they were five months ago. The registered provider and the interim manager have used this time to form a cohesive and skilled staff team. The induction of new staff is more robust, and enhanced training opportunities have been facilitated that have seen a more confident and resourceful staff team.

The interim manager and staff have worked hard in preparation, so that when young people are placed, they will be exposed to a range of positive experiences tailored to their individual likes, interests and aspirations. Staff have spent time researching the local area and have put together a resource pack that identifies a range of activities, groups and sports clubs available for young people.

Initial contact has taken place with education providers, schools and colleges that has set the foundation for close partnership working. The interim manager has very clear expectations that all young people should attend education or vocational training commensurate with their assessed learning needs. Staff are mindful of the importance of encouraging and supporting young people to attend and engage purposefully to enable them to achieve their full potential. Facilities in the home in the form of a designated arts and craft area and an area for learning, with computer accessibility, have been created. The interim manager is alert to the importance of internet safety and the required firewalls are in place. The positioning of the computer is such that supervision can be facilitated without it being oppressive.

The home has undergone a scheme of redecoration, despite there being no young people resident, and now has a friendly and warm atmosphere. Bedrooms are aesthetically furnished and ready for the young person to add their personal touch. Each bedroom is equipped with a noticeboard, the children's guide and a welcome basket containing an array of toiletries. This level of preparation will give a positive welcome, a sense of belonging and help the young person settle more easily.

Workshops have taken place with all the staff, facilitated by the interim manager, on positive engagement, consultation and participation with young people. All staff have completed or are in the process of completing Planning, Analysing, Communicating, and Executing (PACE) training that will underpin the approach used in completing direct work with young people. It is not possible to evidence that the requirements relating to children's views, wishes and feelings and positive engagement have been met as there are no young people in placement. The interim manager continues to have fortnightly team meetings in preparation for when the home reopens and receives new referrals.

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

The location risk assessment for the home has been revised and is up to date. Potential risks associated with radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and gang affiliation are now included and will inform decision-making and compatibility when admitting young people to the home.

Reflective and retrospective practice has taken place with all the staff on the completion of impact risk assessments, behaviour management plans and personalised/individual missing-from-care processes that will run alongside the joint working protocol. This approach has been particularly useful in understanding the shortfalls in care and protection that have put the young people at risk of harm. The interim manager has worked collectively with the staff to embed systems and processes to ensure that new referrals to the home are appropriately assessed, risks are clearly understood and the compatibility of the young people is given high priority. The registered provider has given a clear undertaking that young people will experience a settling in period before any further admissions are considered. The impact of these measures cannot be judged at this time. The protection of children requirement and recommendations made in respect of children missing from care and in the home's admissions processes have not been met.

Professional contacts have been made with the police liaison officer and the missing-from-care coordinator. Joint protocols are in place that will enhance the effective communication with partner agencies in promoting the well-being of the young people. Regular meetings are already underway with the police liaison officer to update on local issues that may impact on the safety and protection of young people. In addition, quarterly meetings have been established with the local authority and partner agencies that assist in keeping lines of communication open and transparent.

All the staff have completed enhanced safeguarding training that has focused on the

impact of past childhood traumas and abuse on current behaviours. Staff feel more confident in managing complex behaviours that may trigger volatile and risk-taking situations. Evaluation of previous practice has been robust in considering alternative strategies, particularly in de-escalation techniques and in the use of incentives. This is an encouraging start. However, professional development is an ongoing process and, as new staff join the team, the development of their knowledge and skills will be crucial in maintaining high standards of care.

The registered provider has recently implemented an electronic reporting tool that, when completed, will escalate any significant concerns or incidents immediately to the senior management team. This process will ensure an immediate response from a senior manager to oversee that appropriate action has taken or is taking place. Additionally, this reporting tool will be used for auditing and quality assurance purposes.

The interim manager understands how and when room searches should be undertaken in order to protect young people. He has already circulated this guidance to staff to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in this area.

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

The previous manager no longer works at the home although they are still registered. An interim manager has been in post since the last inspection and has focused on addressing the shortfalls and ensuring that service provision and delivery are in line with what is set out in the home's statement of purpose.

A new manager has recently been appointed who is appropriately qualified. A comprehensive induction programme is in place that will be monitored by the regional manager. Ongoing support will also be provided in assessing the revised policies and procedures to ensure that young people receive high standards of care, from a responsive and proficient staff team. Team building days have been arranged to take place once the new manager is in post to consolidate the new team and to ensure consistency in practice.

The interim manager has been actively involved in the recruitment of new staff and in progressing the professional development of existing staff. Supervisions have taken place regularly and all staff have received their annual appraisal. The interim manager has used the fortnightly team meetings to evaluate the progress of the improvements as outlined in the action plan. Staff report that the interim manager has made the home better and a more supportive place to work in. Morale has improved and staff feel confident in their practice.

Effective monitoring systems are now in place. All children's files have been audited; a collective initiative, facilitated by the interim manager, for all staff and an opportunity to reflect on past practice. Systems are now in place to audit and review 'live' documents, such as risk assessments following notifiable incidents or significant changes in behaviour. Due to there being no young people in residence, the effectiveness of these systems cannot be tested.

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: 1249183

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: Barry Eannetta

Registered manager: Robert Bamling

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017