

1251076

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to four children with learning disabilities.

There is no registered manager. The acting manager has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 1 August 2023

Date of last inspection: 11 April 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

The home has been without a registered manager since March 2023. However, an interim manager is now in place. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the quality of care provided to children. Children living at the home are happy and settled.

Improvements have been made to how staff consult with children to find out their views, wishes and feelings. Steps are being taken to further enhance communication with the children, such as personalised short stories that describe social situations. For example, using a story specific to them, one child has been supported to choose new curtains for their bedroom. This helps children to feel heard, valued and cared for.

The staff show genuine commitment to supporting children. The children have positive relationships with the staff. Staff speak about children with enthusiasm, warmth and care. This has supported children to build secure and meaningful relationships with a core team of staff that they know, trust and rely on. One family member said their child has made significant progress in many areas, some of which they never thought would be possible.

Children are provided with regular activities of their choice, which they enjoy. However, some of these opportunities have been limited due to the lack of available full-time staff. Holidays have been planned for each child. Staff encourage children to access community activities which match their interests. This supports children's confidence and self-esteem to grow.

Improvements have been made to the environment. The garden is now better used. Children's bedrooms are beginning to be personalised. The manager has plans for a sensory area. Although there have been some improvements to the home, the quality of the general facilities remains poor. There is still work to be completed in the home. This is planned, but projects have been slow to progress.

The safety of children

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding processes. If staff witness poor practice, they know how to escalate this appropriately. There has been one incident that was not reported promptly. However, in response, the manager has since taken the required action. There are no serious shortfalls in the safe care of children at the home.

When necessary, staff have used physical intervention in response to children's unsafe behaviour. Physical intervention is used appropriately and is well documented. However, debriefs are not consistently held with children. This is necessary to ascertain children's wishes and feelings. The manager is in the process of implementing a new system to provide individualised short stories that describe social situations to help children understand and learn from them. This is a new process that needs to be embedded.

Children's risk assessments are not reviewed regularly. This means that important information is not consistently available to new staff. This is needed to keep children safe. The manager is aware of what developments are needed to improve risk assessments and is taking steps to address this shortfall.

Core staff members manage challenging situations effectively and are skilled in de-escalation. However, new and agency staff do not have the required training. For example, not all new staff are trained in physical intervention. This limits the ability of new staff to support the team during behavioural incidents. However, training is planned, and the manager is aware of the urgency of this.

Staff recruitment is carried out in accordance with safer recruitment protocols and procedures. The home has relied on the use of agency staff at times. Agency staff are not always appropriately and safely recruited. The manager has recognised that improvements are required in the delivery, recording and induction of agency staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The home had a period of instability before the new manager was appointed in May 2023. The manager is committed to making a positive difference to children's lives. She is making changes to management processes and has recruited new staff. Building a stable, skilled and consistent staff team is a priority for her. Staff recruitment is ongoing.

The manager recognises the areas of development for the home, and she is trying to address these. She has started to improve monitoring in the home but this is not yet fully effective. The processes are not yet embedded to ensure that all aspects of children's care are monitored and shortfalls responded to.

The majority of staff have completed their mandatory training. Staff have one-to-one meetings and team meetings. The manager is working with the therapeutic health team and has plans for staff's development and training which will be specific to the needs of the children.

External scrutiny from the regulation 44 visitor supports the manager in the monthly review of the home. The current visitor is insightful in identifying the strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, there has been further external scrutiny which

highlights positive experiences and progress for children. This level of scrutiny supports the manager in her role.

Requirements and recommendations were set at the home's last inspection. Following that inspection, the manager has begun to take action to address each of the shortfalls. Progress in addressing the shortfalls is varied. The manager has identified the strengths in the home and the areas that need further improvements. There are plans in place to progress these improvements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/04/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/05/2022	Full	Good
22/06/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good

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 quality and purpose of care standards 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live their comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv)(vii)(viii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii)) This relates to ensuring that the home provides a	22 December 2023

homely environment, meeting the needs of the children by having appropriate equipment and furniture for them to live comfortably. Additionally, ensure that children's bedrooms are personalised, in line with their wishes. This is also in relation to ensuring that children have access to and use of communal areas of the home, inside and outside.	
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; 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)(i)(d)) This relates to ensuring that the home's indoor and outdoor areas are safe and suitable to meet the needs of the children. This is also in relation to ensuring that risk assessments and one-to-one sessions are regular, up to date and in line with children's care plans.	22 December 2023
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— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;	22 December 2023

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)(f)(h)) This relates to ensuring that ongoing quality assurance of all records is completed on a regular basis. This is also in relation to ensuring that there are sufficient staff in place.	
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— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(i)(ii)) This relates to ensuring that staff receive specialist training and have the equipment to develop their practice in order to meet the complex needs of children.	22 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any external agency staff should meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications and the registered person should consider their skills, qualifications and any induction necessary before they start work in the home. The use of agency staff should be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure children receive continuity of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- The registered person should ensure that contingency plans are prepared in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. The manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children's care, including any likely risks. This assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities. This specifically relates to having a stable staff team. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.18)
- The registered person should monitor and review the patterns and trends in turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able to understand and, where possible, address any negative trends. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1251076

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park,
Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Rebecca Grimshaw

Registered manager: The registered managers post is vacant

Inspectors

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector
Emma Dacres, 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 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://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

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: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023