

1251076

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 private organisation. It provides care for up to four children with learning disabilities.

The registered manager post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 April 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 9 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2022	Full	Good
22/06/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good
31/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been through an unsettled period. Children have been affected by recent changes in the home. The registered manager left recently, and there have been other changes in the staff team. Despite this, children continue to receive consistent care and support from a core staff team that they know and trust.

The home fails to ensure a safe, nurturing environment. The quality of the general facilities is poor and not fit for purpose. Repairs and improvements are not completed in a timely manner. As a result, the environment does not promote the well-being of children.

The children have lived at the home for many years. This level of stability creates a sense of belonging for the children. This allows the children to build secure and meaningful relationships with the staff team.

Arrangements are in place to support children to spend time with their families. Staff promote and support children having family time. Staff work with parents and carers wherever possible and appropriate. Communication is strong, and staff understand the importance of this. This supports children to be happy and settled.

Staff assist and encourage children to access enjoyable activities in the local area and the wider community. For example, one child attends a weekly dance club. Another child had a short break in a log cabin. This supports the children to build their confidence and experience different activities.

Staff go to great lengths to create short stories describing social situations, pictures and positive booklets with collections of photos. This supports the children to communicate with staff effectively. Because of this, children are able to express their wishes and feelings.

Children enjoy good health. Children's health needs are well considered and met by staff. Staff work closely with a variety of health services. They support children to attend healthcare appointments. This helps to maintain children's physical well-being.

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

Children's risk assessments are not consistently amended with up-to-date information. They lack clarity and guidance for staff about how to reduce risk and prevent harm. Improvements are being made, but these need time to become embedded in practice.

Individual sessions with children are not regularly taking place. This impacts on the progress of children's individual agreed goals. As a result, it is difficult for children to develop and staff to help each child learn and understand how to keep safe.

The outside garden currently presents potential health and safety risks for the children. Parts of the garden are damaged, and the equipment is not suitable for the needs of the children. This limits the children's participation and choice of activities.

Safeguarding training is completed. The training meets the needs of the children. Staff use their knowledge to support children who become upset, and they de-escalate potentially harmful situations. The staff know and understand the underlying causes of more difficult behaviours the children can present. As a result, children are assured that staff will do everything to keep them safe.

Staff do use physical interventions. This is to prevent children from placing themselves and others at risk of serious harm. Records show that interventions are necessary, proportionate and effective. However, records are not always complete. This limits the impact of reflection or learning outcomes on staff.

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

There is currently no registered manager. There have been changes in the management of the home since the last inspection. The home is being supported by managers from another home, and the responsible individual is also monitoring the home. However, shortfalls remain in several areas, and these have the potential to obstruct children's care, progress and safety.

The home is not yet being run in accordance with its statement of purpose. The responsible individual is aware of this and is taking steps to address the shortfalls. However, this needs to be embedded to ensure the home provides all aspects of children's care and that shortfalls are responded to.

The staff have faced difficult situations. They have had to manage some challenging behaviours. Staff experience positive support from other managers. They also receive daily support and guidance from these managers and each other. The staff team is cohesive and has a shared sense of ownership.

The home is currently in need of further decoration and furniture. Children's bedrooms would benefit from being personalised. The use of the living areas needs to improve to reflect the sensory needs of the children. This will ensure that the home is a warm and homely place for children to live, learn and play safely.

One-to-one meetings with staff do regularly occur. Monthly team meetings also take place. These meetings provide staff with an opportunity to share concerns and develop practice. Despite the difficulties experienced, the team is committed to the children. Views gained from external professionals and family carers were

unanimous about the nurturing care given by the core staff team. One professional said, 'They go above and beyond; they are absolutely amazing.'

Given the lack of a permanent manager, the internal monitoring of the quality of care has been poor. Current systems for monitoring the quality of care fail to evaluate the effectiveness of the care provided. Consequently, areas that require improvement are not addressed, and opportunities to make improvements are missed.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is 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))	31 July 2023

This is in relation to ensuring that the home provides a homely environment, meeting the needs of the children by having appropriate equipment and furniture to live comfortably. Additionally, ensure that individual children's rooms are personalised in line with their wishes. This is also in relation to ensuring that children have access and use of communal areas of the home, internally and externally.	
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 is in relation to ensuring that the internal and external environments 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, kept up to date and in line with children's care plans.	30 June 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—	31 July 2023

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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 is in relation to ensuring that the ongoing quality assurance of all records is completed on a regular basis. This is also in relation to ensuring that 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 is in relation to ensuring that staff receive specialist training and equipment to develop their practice in order to meet the complex needs of children.	31 July 2023

Recommendations

- 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 ensure that the use of external agency staff complements the skills and experiences of the permanent workforce. 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 commence work in the home. The use of agency staff should be carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure that 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 monitor and review the patterns and trends of the 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)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector
Emma Dacres, Social Care Inspector

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