

1258089

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 children's home is registered to accommodate up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation, which has several other homes.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 May 2021

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 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/09/2019	Full	requires improvement to be good
14/03/2019	Interim	declined in effectiveness
11/06/2018	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people:

Children's experiences and progress have been mixed. Weak matching and gaps in management oversight has resulted in a period of instability for children. Incidents have exposed children to risk, intimidation and harm. This has affected children's physical and emotional well-being. The children have since moved on, which mitigates most of the risks.

Most children do not live at the home long enough to reach their full potential. Despite the significant challenges, the staff have worked hard to build positive relationships with the children. This has helped most children to move from the home on a positive note and one child stays in touch.

One child is currently living at the home. The registered manager has given a firm assurance to Ofsted that he will not admit any more children until the child moves on. This decision prevents further opportunities for children to be inappropriately matched.

The staff support the children to learn. Children have access to educational resources that help them to complete their schoolwork. This is helping one child to complete and submit their schoolwork remotely until they can resume face-to-face education.

Children's physical and emotional well-being is promoted by the staff. The registered manager's determined efforts are helping a child to access specialist health services to meet their complex needs. The strong interface between the staff and the in-house clinical professionals supports the staff team to understand the children's complex needs and respond accordingly.

A variety of activities are offered to children to encourage them to enjoy their leisure time. As the restrictions are lifting, this is enabling children to visit places of interest. Some children prefer to stay home despite the encouragement from the staff. Children are supported to keep in touch with their families if it is safe, which promotes children's identity and well-being.

Children are involved in regular meetings, key-work sessions that correspond with their plans, and they have regular chats with the staff. This ensures that children's wishes and feelings are listened to and acted on. Overall, the quality of consultation and independent advocacy ensures that children's views are represented. Children's complaints are dealt with properly.

Children live in a pleasant environment that has been decorated recently. Children's bedrooms are personalised to suit their interests and provide them with ample space to relax and play games. The use of walkie-talkies by staff around the home as a

safety strategy creates an institutional atmosphere. This does not promote a relaxed atmosphere for children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected:

Allegations that children have made against staff are investigated. The dismissal of one staff member several months ago has only been referred recently to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This is not safe practice.

The local authority safeguarding lead officer has oversight of the provider's investigations into allegations against staff. This ensures external oversight and scrutiny from the local authority to assure themselves that children are safe.

Not all of the referrals to the designated safeguarding lead officer have been timely, and this has led to missed opportunities to safeguard children effectively. The registered manager has taken full responsibility for this lack of management oversight. The staff have revisited safeguarding, reporting, and recording training to improve practice.

The staff understand the children's risky and harmful behaviours and the agreed strategies to minimise the risks. Not all staff follow the risk management plans safely and consistently. This has resulted in a lack of vigilance that has not reassured visitors of effective safeguards where there are known risks.

Not all de-escalation strategies have been appropriate. In one instance, a staff member told a child an untruth as a distraction technique. This caused the child distress and led to a further incident that could have been avoided. On occasions, staff have retreated to the office when they have been threatened by children with objects. This does not promote a sense of safety for children or role model positive parenting.

One child rated their safety as '10 out of 10'. They say that nothing bad has happened to them at the home to score less. When children have gone missing from home, the staff team follow the missing-from-home protocols. Staff work with other agencies effectively to ensure that children return home quickly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers:

The manager was registered with Ofsted in October 2020. This is his first registered manager post. The registered manager has since attained the relevant management qualification to support him in his role. He is aspirational for the children and staff team to progress.

Changes to the senior leadership between October 2020 and February 2021 has not helped the registered manager to receive the support and scrutiny to carry out his role efficiently and effectively. During this time, the registered manager has admitted children to the home whose needs cannot be met fully by the staff team. This not

only led to a period of significant disruption, but it has also undermined children's experiences, sense of safety and consistent positive outcomes.

Visible senior management support has resumed in recent months and the registered manager is now getting the right level of support and guidance.

The registered manager has notified Ofsted about significant incidents and has updated Ofsted appropriately. This promotes transparency between the provider and Ofsted. The registered manager has also carried out a review of the children who were placed at the home at the time in order to learn lessons. The review provides a useful appraisal of each child's experiences and progress. The actual lessons for the staff team to adopt in practice are not included. Subsequently, pockets of poor practice continue in relation to how staff manage challenging behaviour.

The provider is addressing staff shortages. Not all application forms explain the reason why the applicants have left their previous employers. This does not promote safer recruitment practices.

Staff are motivated. They comment highly about the management support, training, and guidance. Staff engagement in team meetings, handovers, clinical consultations, and reflective supervisions enable the staff to discuss the children and practice issues. This enables the registered manager to address any performance issues with the staff.

Leaders and managers understand most of the home's strengths and areas for development. Internal monitoring and independent visits help the home to improve. The reason for having locks on the internal doors is not made explicit in the statement of purpose. This could lead to confusion for the staff about how and when they can lock the doors.

Professionals speak positively about the management of the home and the care of the children.

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
Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered manager must make clear the purpose of having locks on internal doors in the home.	30/06/2021
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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) This refers specifically to the registered manager ensuring that timely safeguarding referrals are sent to all relevant professionals and referrals to the DBS are sent without delay.	30/06/2021
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	30/06/2021

This relates to the registered manager ensuring that the lessons-learned reviews are clearly identified and inform future practice. The use of walkie-talkies around the home is reviewed and that staff are constantly vigilant about risk and ensure that visitors are monitored and safeguarded around children effectively.	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	30/06/2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all application forms include the reason why the employment ended.	30/06/2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out—	30/06/2021

how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and

the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.

The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.
(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))

This refers specifically to the staff's use of locking themselves in the office as a de-escalation technique and providing staff with appropriate training to manage highly challenging behaviours effectively.

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: 1258089

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Paul Smith

Registered manager: Juan Fite

Inspector

Jacqueline Malcolm, 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://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2021