

2508545

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 company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children who have social and/or emotional difficulties and who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. . The home offers both medium- and long-term placements for children, irrespective of gender.

The current manager has been in post since October 2019. She has obtained her level 5 qualification in leadership and management. She has also submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 2019

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: not application

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection since registration in May 2019.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(a)(c))	28/02/2020
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7(1)(c)(2)(b)(iii))	28/02/2020
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi))	28/02/2020
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—	28/02/2020

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)) In particular, ensure that staff development is monitored to ensure that staff receive training in a timely manner.	
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. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b))	28/02/2020
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(1)(3)(b))	28/02/2020
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36(1)(a))	28/02/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))	28/02/2020

Recommendations

- Managers should ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risk to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to verify applicants' reasons for leaving relevant employment involving children or vulnerable adults.

Inspection judgements

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

Two children have lived at the home since it was registered in May 2019. One child was admitted to the home for a period of a few days and subsequently returned to her original home, which is within the organisation. At the time of the inspection, one child had recently left the home. This child's transition to semi-independent living was not well managed and did not include sufficient cooperation and communication with the placing authority.

During the course of the child's placement, there was no opportunity for her care plan to be formally reviewed. As a result, the child did not always receive well-coordinated care, and this impacted on her progress while in the placement and decision-making with regard to her care plan.

Staff did not consistently provide the child, who was approaching adulthood, with the opportunity to develop practical skills such as budgeting, laundry and cooking. The child's pathway plan was out of date and contained inaccurate information. This meant that the efforts to prepare the child for her next steps were not coordinated and did not reflect her individual needs.

The child did not have access to independent advocacy. When she shared her views, these were not always acted upon. For example, the child said that she did not wish for her placement to end, but did not receive good enough support to enable her to act on this. In addition, when the child lived at the home, she told staff that changes within the staff team and the use of agency staff were unsettling and contributed to her going missing from the home on occasions. A lack of access to independent advocacy means that children are unable to speak to someone outside of the home about any worries they have regarding their care or uncertainties in respect of their future plans.

The child's relationships with people who are important to her were promoted and maintained by managers and staff. This helped the child to spend positive time with family and friends.

Staff encouraged the child to attend activities. This meant that the child's interests and hobbies were promoted, enabling her to build social skills while having fun.

The child attended education regularly. The manager and staff develop positive relationships with education staff, which ensures effective communication between staff and teachers. As a result, the child was supported to achieve and make progress from her starting points.

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

Managers generally follow safer recruitment practice. However, on one occasion they could not demonstrate that they had taken all reasonable steps to verify why a member of staff had left a role working with children.

When children go missing from the home, staff take some action to try and locate them and help them to return to the home safely. However, on one occasion when the child went missing, a member of staff did not adhere to the child's missing-from-care plan by immediately reporting her missing to the police. As a result, the strategies put in place to reduce the level of risk to the child were not followed. Although the child did not come to harm on this occasion, failing to act promptly had the potential to place the child at risk of harm.

Staff do not always demonstrate their professional curiosity to explore with children incidents that have happened. This can prevent staff from taking prompt and appropriate action when children share information that is concerning. For example, following a missing episode, staff did not share all of the relevant information about what the child said had happened while she was away. This was a missed opportunity to review risk with all of the relevant partner agencies.

The manager and staff work with the in-house clinicians to develop new strategies for helping children to manage their emotions. Children also have direct access to in-house clinicians, and receive specialist support to help them develop their relationships with others and regulate their own emotions. This provides children with the opportunity to develop different coping strategies and promotes resilience.

Staff undertake regular health and safety checks and the home is well maintained. As a result, children live in a safe and homely environment.

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

There have been changes in the home's management since its registration. The registered manager resigned in September 2019. The current manager started her role in October 2019. Although the manager is relatively new to the role, she is beginning to take some steps to improve the quality of care provided for children.

Managers do not consistently use monitoring systems in the home to evaluate and assess the quality of care. For example, the quality of record-keeping is variable and managers do not identify and act on shortfalls in practice so as to fully promote children's welfare and safety.

During this inspection period, some staff have not received training promptly in key areas such as child sexual exploitation and self-harm. This left staff without the essential skills and up-to-date knowledge they needed to provide effective care for children. However, since the child has moved out of the home, managers and staff have undertaken relevant training so that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to provide effective care for children.

Since the home opened, agency staff have been used in order to cover staff shortages. This created some inconsistency for the child and, although she formed some positive relationships with the adults who were caring for her, this aspect of her care was not consistently good. Changes in staffing negatively impacted on her day-to-day experience of living at the home.

The child's case file does not contain accurate information. For example, her pathway plan, personal education plan and health plan were either out of date or missing. Documents that have not been received from placing authorities are not routinely chased by managers and staff. This does not help staff to deliver coordinated support to children.

When the home's statement of purpose has been reviewed and updated, it has not always been sent to Ofsted as required. As a result, the regulator is not being kept informed of any changes to the service or staffing.

When significant incidents occur in the home, managers and staff do not always act promptly, as required by regulation. This leaves the regulator without the essential information it needs to monitor the home.

Managers and staff receive regular supervision. This means that managers and staff are being provided with regular opportunities to receive feedback on their practice.

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: 2508545

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: Tina Morten

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Junor-Fitzpatrick: social care inspector

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