

2532036

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have learning disabilities and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager of this home is not yet registered. She was appointed in November 2020.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 25 July 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

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

The care of children

Young people enjoy living in this home and are happy. They receive good continuity of care from a stable and consistent staff team. This has resulted in positive, long-term placements for young people.

Educational outcomes for young people are varied. Some young people have been difficult to engage. However, work completed with young people and incentives in place have improved attendance levels. This means that young people have made progress in line with their starting points.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attend health related services. External agencies are utilised, which ensures that young people have access to specialist services that are specific to their individual needs. These relate to substance misuse services, therapeutic support and specialist doctors. As a result, young people have improved physical and mental health and feel more able to manage their emotions.

The home's care plans are comprehensive. Staff are familiar with the content of these and they work together to support young people to achieve. Unfortunately, staff and young people do not have access to up-to-date plans agreed by the local authority. Because of this, it is unclear whether all parties are working to the same objectives to promote young people's well-being effectively.

There is uncertainty for one young person in relation to the plans for his future. He is due to move from the home, but an agreed placement is yet to be finalised. Concerns in relation to care planning for this young person have not been escalated to an appropriate person. This is causing the young person frustration and distress and has the potential to affect his emotional well-being.

The safety of children

The staff team provides consistent rules and boundaries for young people. This minimises incidents and helps young people to feel safe. When incidents do occur, these are well managed. Incident records show the detailed steps taken to ensure young people's safety. Incidents are reflected on, and strategies to manage future risk-taking behaviour are adapted accordingly. This serves to minimise future incidents and strengthen the behaviour support offered to each young person.

Risk assessments and support plans are robust and are regularly updated. Protocols are specific to each young person and demonstrate a clear understanding of individual needs. Assessments also consider the risks of COVID-19 to those in the home. For example, missing-from-home risk assessments take into consideration

young people's associates while they are missing from care and the impact that their return may have on others. Highlighting these risks enables the home to put effective strategies in place to reduce them.

Some aspects of the community posed a risk to one young person. Location risk assessments have been updated to minimise the likelihood of this happening in the future. Assessments carefully consider the risks posed by the local area and community and detail measures to be taken by staff to reduce these. This assessment also clearly informs the home's admission processes. This ensures that young people are only offered a placement at this home when it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to take measured, age-appropriate risks. One young person said, 'They help me by pushing me to do things that I am scared of doing, things I think I can't do, this makes my life better.' As a result, young people learn the necessary skills to prepare them for their future.

Leaders and managers

The home has had a change in management since the last full inspection. This has not impacted on young people in placement. The new manager has worked in this home for over 10 years. She knows young people well and has positive relationships with them. Staff speak highly of the new manager. They say that she is approachable, transparent and that she leads by example.

Both the previous manager and the new manager have demonstrated strong leadership and management skills. They have advocated for young people and challenged external professionals where necessary. This has supported young people's safety and well-being and reinforces the positive relationship already held within the home.

The staff are skilled and experienced. They are confident in managing young people's behaviours and understand the individual risks presented to each young person. However, some team members have not yet received substance misuse training. This means that not all staff have the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to all risk-taking behaviours presented by young people currently living in the home.

The manager has consistent oversight of records and uses lessons learned to further improve practice. Furthermore, effective monitoring and review systems are utilised to make improvements and to address shortfalls. This means that young people are supported by a team who strive to provide high-quality care.

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— 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 (c))	15 January 2021
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; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	15 January 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to: respond to the health needs of children; administer basic first aid and minor illness treatment; help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. In particular, all staff should receive training which is specific to young people's needs and risks, for example substance misuse training. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2532036

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Paul Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector
Natalie Bennett, Social Care Inspector

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