

2573144

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two young people. It is part of a large social care company. The home provides therapeutic care for young people who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma.

The home re-registered in May 2020 following a change to the company name. There were no changes to the registered manager who transferred to the new registration.

She is currently working towards her level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Visit dates: 13 to 14 October 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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

There are two children living in the home. They are settled and making good progress in all areas of their lives.

Staff work hard to develop and maintain strong and supportive relationships with children. Children have told professionals outside the home that they like living in the home and staff are kind to them.

Children's wishes and feelings are listened to and acted on. During the period of social restrictions due to COVID-19, one child requested football goals and a USB streaming video player for the home. Staff ensured that these were purchased, and they are well used. Where children have requested support from an advocate, the staff team has made sure that this has been put in place.

Children are making progress with their education. One child has achieved excellent GCSE grades, so he can attend sixth form and is now completing A levels as he aspires to apply to university. Another child has recently started a 'skills building' programme with the Prince's Trust after not attending school for some time. This is a significant step for this child, and one professional commented to inspectors, 'This would not have happened without the resilience and persistence of staff who really care about him.'

During the period of social restriction, staff ensured that children stayed in touch with their family and friends. Staff do this because they understand how important these relationships are.

Staff understand the complex needs of the children in the home. Despite challenges, the registered manager has secured mental health support for both children. When she was met with resistance from those services, the registered manager was persistent in her approach to ensure that children get the help they need. This allows children to receive specific and specialised care relevant to their needs.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risk and work hard to keep children safe. Staff talk openly with children to address any concerns or inappropriate behaviours. Children respond well to this. The number of incidents in the home is low, but when they happen they are managed effectively.

Children's risk assessments are linked to support plans. Staff understand the risks presented and are able to ensure the safety of children. Staff have talked to children

about COVID-19 and helped them to understand the risks of the virus so they can stay safe.

Managers recruit staff safely. This means that children are cared for by adults who are clear about how to do this well.

Staff complete training which is specific to the needs of young people. For example, following a significant incident regarding children using the internet, the staff team completed online training in this area to refresh their knowledge. This enables staff to develop their understanding and practice.

The registered manager and staff receive support from a clinical team. This helps staff to adopt the therapeutic approach of the organisation. Due to staff's informed approach, there have been no children going missing for some time and no physical interventions with children. Reflective practice is used by staff, and this is encouraged with children as well. For example, one strategy involved the introduction of a journal for a child to record his thoughts, wishes and feelings. This helps him to manage his emotions and express himself.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is approachable and supportive. She ensures that she is available to staff, and they have responded well to the improvements she has made to the home since she took over. At the point of re-registration, there were six outstanding requirements. These have all been met.

The home has a core team of regular staff, who provide consistent care for children. Staff have worked overtime to cover vacancies, which has reduced the need for the use of agency staff. This means that children are consistently cared for by people who know them well.

The registered manager has good oversight of the home. She makes good use of the audit tools and support systems in place and, as a result, she understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. She regularly reviews the quality of care in the home and puts in place actions to improve this where needed.

The manager and senior care workers provide regular supervision to staff. This is reflective and considers the needs of children, as well as strategies to improve day-to-day care. Where there is a need, the manager ensures that staff have individual support from the clinical team, to further their understanding. This has a positive impact on the care the children receive.

The registered manager has submitted a statement of purpose to Ofsted. However, this does not contain full or accurate information relating to the home.

The home works well with other professionals and develops good relationships with them. An external professional commented, 'The home works well with all agencies and will hold local authorities to account if things are not done. The registered

manager will complain and advocate for young people in her care and I cannot ask for more than this.'

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 registered person must — keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (3)(a))	11/11/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2573144

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited,
Venture House, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock,
Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Denise Knowles

Registered manager: Kate Whitehouse

Inspectors

Dean Wilton, Social Care Inspector
Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector

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