

2578355

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 large private provider. It is registered to provide care and support for four children with complex needs. Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2021 and is suitably experienced. The manager is currently completing the relevant qualification.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive attuned, thoughtful care from staff who are passionate about their well-being. Some children are clear that the level of care and support they have from staff is something they have not experienced before. One child told the inspector that the staff had a 'special place in my heart' and another said 'there is nothing they can do better'. It is clear that the staff make a positive difference to children's lives.

The registered manager makes measured decisions about children moving into the home. She is clear on what information she needs to make her decisions and makes sure she has this. One placing authority did not share all known information about a child before the registered manager made her decision. The registered manager completed a learning review of this situation after the child left the home and changed her approach as a result. This learning is evident in her current practice and means that the registered manager is confident rather than risk averse. By gathering information comprehensively, the registered manager is aware of children's support needs, and she plans accordingly. When incidents happen, staff are generally prepared for these. At these times, they show children understanding and acceptance. As a result, staffs and children's relationships deepen. This also means that incidents reduce in frequency and intensity over time.

Children have mixed experiences of leaving the home. On two occasions, children have left at short notice, but only after staff have worked tirelessly to help children settle into the home. As a result, short-notice endings are a last resort. In contrast, other children leave the home after making significant progress and return to live with their family. For these children, their time in the home has been life-changing.

Children make mixed progress in education. The registered manager advocates strongly for children who are out of education until this is resolved. Staff also enjoy taking children to and from school to help children start and end their days feeling supported. As a result, children are beginning to make progress with the support and encouragement of staff.

Professionals and parents are largely complimentary about the staff and the work they do with their children. Professionals describe staff as 'adaptable and creative'. Parents are happy with how staff and the registered manager care for their children. One parent told the inspector, 'I think they do a fantastic job.' This shows that the staff and the registered manager have the confidence of children's networks.

Staff work hard to broaden children's experiences. For example, staff help children develop the range of foods they eat. This leads to children having improved diets. Staff also attend to children's previously unmet health needs. For example, all children are now up to date with their childhood immunisations.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff and managers put in place risk assessments that help staff support children's needs. These include advice from in-house clinicians as well as staff, drawing on their own experience of the children they care for. Due to the complexities of children's early life experiences, there are times when children show risky behaviour. At these times, staff and managers adapt their approach to meet these changing risks and needs. As a result, over time staff develop a deeper understanding of children, which results in strong, supportive relationships.

Staff follow children's plans when they go missing. Staff search for them and stay in touch via phone. Staff also report children to the police as needed, particularly for those children who are more vulnerable. Despite these plans, incidents of missing do not always reduce as quickly as they could. As a result, there remain times when children are missing from the home and are, therefore, at risk of harm and exploitation. There have also been times when children managed to leave the home during the night without staff being aware. The registered manager took immediate action to change practice so that this does not happen again.

Staff generally make good decisions about children's well-being. However, there have been a very small number of times when staff have given children poor advice. The registered manager investigates these incidents. She then ensures that practice changes or staff move on from the home if they do not change their approach. On the rare occasion when children take actions that are a serious risk to their health, they seek support from staff – with the full expectation that staff will help them. As a result, staff respond quickly, and this further helps to deepen relationships that children can rely on.

Recruitment is safely managed in the home. For example, the registered manager follows through on any concerns noted in referencing, no matter how small. As a result, the registered manager is confident her staff care for children to the high standard she expects.

Staff work hard to make sure that children live in a clean, welcoming home that meets their needs. Staff search children's rooms when they need to and are clear why they do this. Although children are not always happy about this, they understand the reasons why and that staff want to keep them safe. The registered manager has also completed a review of the safety of the area around the home. Unfortunately, this does not include all known risks to children, nor does the registered manager consult with all relevant partners and professionals. This is a missed opportunity to better understand the local area.

Staff have a good understanding of children's triggers relating to self-harming behaviour. If children do harm themselves, they seek support and are confident staff will respond with compassion and care. As a result, there are periods of time when some children's self-harming behaviour reduces significantly. While this remains a risk for some children, staff are alert to signs of harm as they care deeply about children's welfare.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is ambitious and committed to children. She has high expectations of staff, and they rise to this challenge. Staff feel well supported by managers and have enormous respect for them. Staff enjoy coming to work, and being with the children and each other, and they show resilience when times are challenging. It is clear that staff share the registered manager's vision for care in the home. This results in meaningful relationships that children value.

Children have frequent opportunities to share their views with staff. Staff often complete one-to-one sessions with children so that they can talk about the things that are important to them. This supplements the frequent discussions children and staff have in day-to-day life. In addition, the one-to-one sessions are loosely planned over time to meet the targets in children's overarching plans. This means the registered manager can monitor progress and identify when children need additional support.

The registered manager is confident to challenge placing authorities as needed. For example, when children do not have school places she will challenge to ensure that children gain the learning they deserve. The registered manager is also proactive in ensuring that children have time to talk to someone if they have been missing from the home. Where this has not been possible, she challenges children's placing authorities as needed. As a result, staff have more information to help them adapt their approach to improve children's safety.

The registered manager has systems in place to support her oversight. She has adapted this over time to prioritise the information that matters to the children. The registered manager has included senior staff in completing audits. This helps their professional learning and progression. While most areas show excellent oversight, there are some occasions where medication records are incomplete. There is no indication this has impacted on children, but this is of concern due to the nature of the medication.

The registered manager mostly keeps the regulator up to date about relevant concerns. However, there have been some occasions when notifications about serious incidents have not been made as required. The registered manager is now clear on the criteria for notification and so this is no longer a concern. In addition, there are times when notifications are not made quickly, which reduce the regulator's timely oversight of the home.

The registered manager understands the importance of developing staff and commits to this. Staff accept additional tasks to help their learning. The registered manager puts staff forward for development programmes, and the registered manager openly recognises their achievements. The registered manager uses team meetings to discuss children and the day-to-day running of the home. This helps staff to be consistent in their care. In addition, the registered manager uses team meetings to develop staff's understanding of regulations by exploring how these

make a difference to children's lives. Not only does this develop professional knowledge, but these combined measures also inspire staff to do their best for children. This has also led to morale in the home being high. As a result, staff are committed to the children and their colleagues.

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 make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that medication administration records are signed by staff when medication is given to children.	3 August 2022
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that risks around the location of the home are fully considered relating to children's specific needs. In addition, the registered manager must consult with local partners and others to inform the review of risk in the local area.	17 August 2022

Recommendations

- The registered manager must ensure that notifications of relevant incidents to the regulator are made without delay, including at weekends or on public holidays. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

- The registered manager must ensure that children's plans concerning them going missing should reduce risk, as well as provide guidance to staff about how to react should this happen. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)

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: 2578355

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 WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Rebecca Grimshaw

Registered manager: Leigha Taylor

Inspector

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector

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