

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

The home is part of a large private organisation. The home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

Since the last inspection, two children have left the home and three children have moved in. At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

There is a registered manager in post who holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 5 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/07/2022	Full	Good
13/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Parts of the home require attention and a deep clean. There are areas which are not homely, with scuff marks on the walls, and the light in a children's bathroom had dead flies inside the fitting. Other aspects of the home provide a less homely feel, including a sign on the office door which states that children should not come in unless invited. This gives an institutionalised look to the home.

Care planning has been poor for one child who has been at the home for over a year. Leaders have made the decision to end this child's placement. Leaders and the manager could not demonstrate that they had effectively reviewed the child's care or tried different strategies for any length of time to try and keep the child at the home. This child views the setting as their home and the staff and their peers as family. The reason behind the decision to end the placement was not clear, and leaders and the manager were unable to show an understanding of how moving from the home may impact the child.

Staff encourage the children to attend health appointments. Staff educate children through key-work sessions on the importance of seeing health professionals. Leaders work collaboratively with external health professionals. As a result, children's health needs are well understood by staff and are being met.

Leaders, managers and staff have positive relationships with the children. One child told the inspector, 'I enjoy living at the home, and I do not have a bad word to say about it.' Staff enjoy time with children and children are encouraged to spend time with their peers in the home. As a result, children feel that they belong.

Staff encourage children to see those people who are important to them and they help children attend family time. The manager and staff have successfully supported children previously at the home to return to their family homes.

The manager and staff encourage children to make progress with their education. The manager is quick to identify barriers to children's learning. This has allowed prompt action, with regular progress meetings with education professionals taking place to support children who struggle with education. As a result, children are provided with bespoke learning experiences which help them to thrive.

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

Staff's approach to supporting children who go missing-from-care is inconsistent. One child who was previously high risk of going missing from the home has not been missing since the previous inspection. However, on another occasion when a child left the home when feeling upset, staff did not follow this child's risk

management plan. The child's missing-from-care plan advises that staff should have followed the child due to their presenting behaviours. However, this was not done and the child was allowed independent time away from the home. On the child's return to the home, the child self-harmed. On another occasion, following an incident of going missing from care, a child told police that staff are putting children at risk. The manager and staff did not explore the comment with the child. Managers and staff did not show sufficient curiosity and did not assure themselves that the child was safe.

Children's concerns regarding staff's practice are not always addressed. For example, a complaint was made regarding favouritism by staff and inequality between how children are treated., However, the manager focussed solely on the concerns raised regarding a peer and did not respond to the concerns raised regarding staff practice. In addition, concerns were raised regarding how a member of staff spoke to a child. However, the manager's response focussed on how the child felt and that staff would try not to make them feel uncomfortable rather than how they will address the staff member's practice going forward. This does not reassure children that managers hear and understand their concerns and will take action to address them

The manager usually keeps the regulator updated on significant events. However, there has been one occasion when a notification of a significant events has not been made. This was following a child alleging that they had received death threats online. The manager did not explore these concerns sufficiently to evidence whether or not these threats occurred or not. This does not help the manager to understand whether the child is at risk or not and does not help the regulator to have oversight of certain incidents within the home.

Leaders and the manager do not always evaluate the effectiveness of consequences. This does not demonstrate that the manager assures herself that staff are using fair and effective consequences.

Allegations made against staff are responded to appropriately and managed well.

Staff educate children on how to keep safe online. Children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation have been provided with effective key-work sessions. Staff teach children about the risks of being groomed online. As a result, children are having safer online experiences. Safe internet systems in the home have also allowed children to have safer online experiences.

The manager and staff have successfully supported children at risk of exploitation. The manager has worked well as part of a multi-agency team to put in place appropriate measures for one child. Staff have provided this child with education around keeping themselves safe when out in the community. As a result, this child has reduced their risky behaviours and is now graded as at low risk of exploitation.

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

The manager has been registered since September 2021. Staff spoken to described the manager as supportive. One staff member said 'The manager is really good, she can sense when I need a supervision. She is good at taking the proactive steps. However, during the inspection, the manager told the inspector that staff were drained and numerous records described the team as feeling frustrated and experiencing blocked care in relation to one child. Managers have not taken sufficient action to address these concerns.

Managers regularly share information with the therapeutic team and external professionals regarding children's current needs and presentations. However, these meetings are not used effectively to devise and implement new strategies. In addition, strategies to support children are not discussed regularly in team meetings. This does not equip staff with the strategies needed to help some children make progress.

Shortfalls in the managers and staff's practice have not been identified or acted on. This includes the poor responses to complaints made by children and concerns about staff practice. Monitoring systems have not been used effectively to identify areas that require development to improve children's experiences within the home.

Most of the staff team are qualified or working towards a level 3 diploma or equivalent. However, there is one staff member who has not completed the qualification within the required timescale. The manager is supporting her senior staff to develop their skills through completing audits.

Since the last inspection, no new permanent staff have been recruited. However, new agency staff have been supporting the home. The manager has undertaken thorough checks on agency staff, ensuring that full recruitment checks are completed by the agency. As a result, the manager has been assured that staff have undergone the required checks to work with children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff take effective action when a child goes missing from the home and that staff follow children's missing-from-care plans. In addition, that investigation are carried out when concerns are raised regarding children's welfare to evidence if a risk is present or not.	22 June 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	22 June 2023

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) The registered person must ensure that they review the effectiveness and fairness of consequences in a timely manner. In addition, the registered person must ensure that any concerns raised by children are fully understood and responded to appropriately.	
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 arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that care planning arrangements are appropriate and in the best interests of the children.	22 June 2023

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— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or (works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part time basis.	22 June 2023
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(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (30(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that all staff complete their level 3 diploma or equivalent qualification within two years of their starting date.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to the home being a clean and homely environment.	22 June 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that notifications of relevant incidents are made to the regulator 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)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park,
Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Rebecca Grimshaw

Registered manager: Leigha Taylor

Inspector

Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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