

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 who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 April 2025

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: 5 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2024	Full	Good
18/06/2024	Full	Inadequate
22/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/07/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home, all of whom were present and spoke with the inspector.

Children have made some progress since the last inspection; however, safeguarding arrangements and management systems require improvement. Shortfalls in these areas have negatively affected children's overall experiences in the home.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home. One child's transition was well managed, taking into account each child's needs, allowing the child to feel reassured and settled. However, the other child's move was poorly handled, with no evidence of impact assessment on the children already living in the home. No solutions to mitigate potential risks were documented, leaving children vulnerable. As a result, some children's behaviours have regressed and there has been an increase in incidents.

Staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of children's needs, implementing incentives to encourage positive engagement and behaviour. One child said they feel cared for by staff, describing one named member of staff as 'the best'. During moments of distress, staff provide emotional support, helping children feel secure. Children have strong and trusting relationships with staff, frequently seeking them out for activities and emotional connection.

Staff advocate for children's education. They provide work when children have no school place. This encourages children to achieve positive outcomes in education. All three children have tailored education plans. One of the children receives education at home from an external agency. The other two have established plans to reintegrate them back into education. A virtual school professional described the home's staff as 'fantastic and supportive'.

Children's health needs are well supported by staff, who encourage attendance at appointments related to emotional well-being and sexual health. Staff proactively respond to emerging health needs by seeking specialist input. Children receive guidance to understand their health needs, ensuring they engage with relevant services. Medication storage is secure and administration is accurately recorded.

Staff actively support children in maintaining relationships with family and friends. Children's families are welcomed into the home when it is safe to do so, ensuring children have opportunities to spend time with the people who are most important to them.

The home is well decorated and well maintained. Children contribute to decorating their bedrooms, which reflect their individual interests. Staff and children sit together for some meals at the dining table, fostering positive social interactions at mealtimes.

Children develop independence in line with their age and level of understanding. When additional support is needed, staff use creative strategies to engage children in skill-building activities. One child is making significant progress with their independence plan, including in budgeting, meal preparation, independent travel and liaising with universal services. These experiences prepare children for adulthood and independent living.

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

Individual risk assessments provide critical guidance for staff in supporting each child's unique needs. However, when one child moved into the home, no information was provided to staff to inform their practice and the manager had not chased this from the placing authority. As a result, staff initially did not have the required information, leading to inconsistencies in the child's care due to the lack of advice and structured routine.

When children go missing, staff provide a well-coordinated response, following missing-from-home protocols. They actively take measures to locate children, reducing the risk of harm. Staff demonstrate professional curiosity, identifying potential triggers for children going missing and developing risk mitigation strategies tailored to each child's circumstances.

Since the last inspection, there has been a four-month period when physical intervention was not used. However, incidents requiring intervention have recently increased over a short period. Management oversight of significant events has been inconsistent, and the manager has not always supported staff reflection following incidents. This lack of structured review limits opportunities to improve children's experiences and reduce future occurrences.

Staff mostly provide effective support in response to self-harm concerns. Children are given a 'self-harm safe kit', containing comfort items to help alleviate self-injurious urges. Staff encourage the use of diaries, allowing children to document their emotions. Staff listen with empathy and compassion, fostering a safe space for open conversations. Children say they feel supported and reassured in these moments.

Staff ensure appropriate internet safety measures are in place. Access restrictions limit children's exposure to age-inappropriate content and staff conduct random device checks to identify potential safeguarding concerns. In addition, staff have meaningful conversations with children about online risks, promoting safe and informed internet use.

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

At the time of the inspection, the registered manager was on leave. The responsible individual led the inspection process.

Staff receive an effective induction and complete a varied training programme, which includes specialist areas tailored to children's needs. Staff attend team meetings, occasionally supported by a company-employed psychologist. However, supervision is inconsistent, and records lack quality and detail. New staff do not receive regular supervision in line with company policy, limiting opportunities for reflection on practice and making improvements in children's care experiences.

Various monitoring systems are in place to support management oversight of children's daily care. However, these systems have failed to identify gaps, including the absence of statutory documents and guidance for staff in managing relationships between children. As a result, opportunities to address weaknesses have been missed.

Staff morale is low and team members say they feel unsupported by managers. During the inspection, senior leaders outlined plans to address concerns about staff well-being. While vacancies have contributed to staffing pressures, the use of consistent agency staff has helped maintain familiarity for children.

Leaders have failed to notify Ofsted of all significant events. For example, a staff member did not safeguard a child appropriately following a self-harm incident, and this was not reported. The failure to notify compromises external oversight of safeguarding practices in the home.

Despite these concerns, staff maintain strong relationships with external professionals and agencies. Staff challenge inappropriate plans, advocating for children in professional meetings. Two social workers provided positive feedback on staff communication and practice, acknowledging their valuable contributions to securing positive outcomes for children.

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, The 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 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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	30 June 2025
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)) This particularly refers to the majority of children's recent placements being ended by the provider giving notice to the placing local authority. The registered person must ensure that matching processes for children are robust.	30 June 2025
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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This specifically refers to ensuring that records of incidents are clear, detailed and demonstrate management oversight, reflection and learning.	30 June 2025

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This particularly refers to supervision of staff taking place in line with the home's policy of a minimum of six times a year and every two weeks during induction.	30 June 2025
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— 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)) This specifically refers to ensuring robust quality assurance and monitoring systems are in place, used regularly and recorded.	30 June 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or	30 June 2025

concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.
(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))

This particularly refers to an incident that the registered manager understood, should have been notified to Ofsted.

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: 17 Wolverhampton Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1AP

Responsible individual: Alexander Scott

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Latoya Morgan, Social Care Inspector

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