

2586949

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 privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional needs and/or learning disabilities.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager post has been vacant since November 2024. There has been a new manager in post since February 2025 who plans to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2025

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 provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Good
15/11/2022	Full	Good
23/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There have been some changes in the staff team in the last year, with bank and agency staff being used to cover shifts. This, and changes to management arrangements in the home have led to some inconsistencies in the quality-of-care children have received.

Children attend education and are making progress due to the help and support they receive from staff. One child who previously would not attend school is progressing from a part-time to a full-time timetable. One child has been supported to attend an alternative provision, which has boosted their confidence, and they are now making plans to take their exams.

Children's moves in and out of the home are positive. Managers carefully consider the needs of children moving into the home, assessing their needs alongside the needs of the children already living in the home and the skills and experience of the staff. The manager speaks to those who know the children, visits the children and arranges visits to the home so children can meet staff before they move in. This helps children to feel welcomed.

When children move on from this home, they experience planned moves to semi-independent living. Staff help children to develop skills such as budgeting, cooking, travelling and doing household chores. This enables them to be confident in taking their next steps. The staff celebrate the children's time in the home with meals, tea parties and thoughtful gifts.

Staff create thoughtful memory boxes and photo books for children to be able to look back at their time in the home. Staff also create positive comments books for children. This helps children feel valued and develop positive self-esteem.

Reward charts are personalised to children's specific needs and interests. This encourages engagement in developing skills in targeted areas, with rewards and celebrations for achievements children make.

Children enjoy various activities, such as go-karting, going to the cinema, horse-riding and football. This helps them develop hobbies and interests. Children spend time with friends on planned activities and at friends' homes. They are also encouraged to spend time with their friends in the home. This enables children to build social skills and form and maintain friendships.

Children's views and wishes are captured in monthly discussions. Outcomes are fed back to children in thank you letters which list any actions carried out and highlight their positive achievements for the month. This helps children feel listened to and valued.

Children's bedrooms are well furnished and homely. Children take pride in keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy. However, damage is not always repaired to a good standard. There is a large crack in one child's bedroom ceiling and painting in the downstairs bathroom has not been completed.

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

During an incident, a child managed to obtain a set of office keys from a staff member's pocket. This allowed them to access both the office and the home's car keys. The young person then proceeded to drive the car, placing them and others in danger. Following the incident, additional safety measures have been put in place to prevent a reoccurrence.

Managers do not always follow safer recruitment practices when using agency staff. Failure to check key documentation has led to a child being harmed. Systems have since been revised to ensure relevant checks are carried out.

Children have positive and trusting relationships with their allocated key workers. New staff members are being supported to build positive relationships with the children. Staff are committed to providing children with good-quality care and support. This is helping children develop a sense of safety and security in the home.

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Most staff understand children's individual risks and strategies to support them. The children's risks are documented in behaviour support and risk management plans that direct and support staff to prevent and reduce risks. However, agency staff and new staff to the home are not always familiar with children's individual needs and how to de-escalate children's behaviour. This has on one occasion resulted in the police being called to the home.

Allegations of abuse are handled quickly and fairly. Allegations are investigated fully. Referrals are made to external professionals to allow for independent oversight. However, leaders and managers do not always share the outcomes of investigations with children, to reassure them that they are being listened to.

Staff know children's individual missing-from-home plans and follow them. When children go missing, staff remain in contact with them and encourage them to return home. Staff look in places that children are known to go and check with family and friends. This lets the children know that staff care. Staff have open communication with safeguarding professionals, such as the police and missing coordinators, to ensure that all relevant resources are used to find children. Children are welcomed when they return to the home and staff ensure they are safe and well. Managers have worked with the children and professionals on approving friends' homes for overnight stays, which has reduced children's episodes of going missing.

The children have access to specialist professional support, such as drug and alcohol workers and mental health support. Staff encourage and facilitate the children's engagement with specialist professionals. This means the children have access to professionals who are most able to help them with their specific issues.

Following safety concerns, CCTV was fitted to the outside of the property in February 2024. Not all children's authorities have provided written permission.

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

This has been a challenging time for staffing in the home. The manager and deputy manager both left the home in November. Leaders implemented a management support plan to ensure the staff and children were supported in the interim while a new manager was identified.

There is now a new manager in post who is suitably experienced. They have a focused vision for the home, staff and children. In their short time in the home, they have drawn up an action plan which they are working through. The manager is motivated and is committed to improving outcomes for children.

Staff have not completed training specific to the individual needs of the children, such as substance misuse. This does not ensure that staff have the necessary training to understand and meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers have identified that children struggle with the inconsistency of bank and agency staff working in the home. Leaders and managers have worked to recruit staff and reduce the use of agency staff. There is now a stable staff team in place, providing children with consistency.

There is good managerial oversight of the home. Leaders and managers complete monthly audit reports with clear actions for the upcoming month. The deputy also completes a weekly checklist. This ensures the home is operating in line with regulation.

Team meetings take place monthly and are well attended by the team. The home's psychotherapist attends to help staff reflect on practice and devise support strategies for children. Team meetings are used to review risk assessments for children and policies and procedures. This helps promote collaborative working.

Induction programmes for new starters are detailed and ensure staff are aware of important information to carry out their roles. Staff are supported throughout their probation period with regular reviews to identify any further learning or development required. This ensures staff are prepared to support children in the home.

Staff receive regular supervisions. These are supportive and focus on reflection of practice and planning for children. Despite changes in the management of the home, staff feel they are fully supported by leaders and managers and enjoy working in the home.

Leaders, managers and staff have built positive relationships with professionals involved in the care of the children. Professionals report that managers and staff are communicative and keep them updated on all aspects of the children's 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, 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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have completed training to meet children's individual needs.	12 May 2025
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure they are following safer recruitment practices when using agency staff, to prevent children coming to harm.	12 May 2025

The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure they relay outcomes of allegations and/or complaints to children.	12 May 2025
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(b)) Specifically, leaders and manager must ensure they have sought authorisation from children's placing authorities for the use of CCTV around the property.	12 May 2025
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)(c) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that repairs to any damage and decorating are completed to a good standard, particularly in relation to the ceiling in a child's bedroom and painting in the downstairs bathroom.	12 May 2025

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: 2586949

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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: Gemma Waddington

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Renée Sims, Social Care Inspector

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