

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 privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to three children who may exhibit complex behaviours because of their childhood experiences or may have learning disabilities. Three children were being cared for at the home at the time of inspection.

The home has been in operation since 2007. It was re-registered with Ofsted in April 2020 following changes to the provider company's registration.

A suitably qualified and experienced manager has been appointed and is working in the home. She is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 14 and 15 October 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following a monitoring visit to the home on 15 July 2020, a compliance notice was served against Regulation 13, The leadership and management standard.

On 26 August 2020, Ofsted conducted a further monitoring visit, to assess the progress made in meeting the compliance notice. At this visit, the inspectors found that sufficient action had been taken to meet the steps in the compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make steady progress in a home environment which is nurturing and child centred. Staff provide children with a good quality of care in response to each child's individual needs. A social worker said: 'They make [child's name] feel happy and safe. The home is full of love and laughter.'

Well-considered and planned admissions for children into the home mean that children experience stability and consistency, which supports them and promotes their welfare. Children living in the home are at the heart of decision-making.

One child, who is new to the home, was able to visit and meet staff and children before moving in. She has quickly established herself and developed warm relationships with staff. The child is being supported to maintain her school place in a different area to the home in order to give her some consistency with her education and support her to maintain her friendships.

One child, who is not currently in full-time education, is not being provided with educational activities to complete outside of his reduced school timetable. The child's day lacks structure. He spends prolonged periods of time with friends in the community. This places him at increased risk of involvement in negative behaviours.

Staff are not always being provided with information about how each child's pupil premium monies are being spent by schools. As a result, staff are not always able to work with schools to ensure that children's educational needs are being sufficiently promoted.

Children living long distances from their families and communities are supported to visit their families and people important to them. Staff travel with children and stay locally, so that children can have extended time with their families, knowing that staff are nearby to offer support if needed. Staff have good relationships with other residential staff and arrange for children to have overnight stays at their brother's or sister's homes. This helps children to maintain these important relationships and provides children with a sense of normality.

Children are helped to understand and remember their time living at the home through memory books that they, and staff, regularly contribute to. Staff have recently introduced a 'Harry Potter' book for each child. This is a story describing each child's journey into and through the home. It illustrates each child's past, present, and plans and aspirations for their future. These books provide a valuable contribution to each child's understanding of their life story.

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

Children's well-being and safety are promoted through staff's good understanding of each child's strengths and vulnerabilities. Children's case records are comprehensive and provide staff with the information they need to care for children safely.

One child, who has lived at the home for four years, has not had his delegated authority agreements reviewed or updated in this time, and they were not signed by the relevant local authority officer. This has not had an impact on the child's care to date but has the potential to leave staff without the necessary legal authority to undertake their care of the child, particularly in an emergency.

Children's risk management plans are regularly reviewed and amended as needed to support children and reduce risks. However, these plans are not written in a way which supports staff or children to understand any changes to risk levels; or which enables staff to monitor progress and identify patterns.

Each child's risk management plans are considered alongside their therapeutic support plans. These are written by the provider's clinical support team. These plans help staff to understand children's previous trauma and current emotional needs. They provide them with strategies to follow to care for children in a way which increases their resilience and emotional well-being.

Children are regularly praised and rewarded for positive behaviours and achievements. Sanctions are used sparingly, but, when they are used, they are appropriate and effective.

There has only been one use of physical intervention with a child in the reporting period. There was a minimal use of restraint, which kept the child and staff safe. The incident is recorded in detail, and there is good management oversight. As the responsible individual was involved in the restraint, a senior manager from the organisation evaluated the incident. This provides for independent review and supports learning from incidents.

There is a strong culture in the home of celebrating each child's achievements alongside the minimal use of negative sanctions and physical interventions. This provides children with an environment in which they can flourish and build trusting relationships with the adults caring for them.

Children have a lovely home to live in. It is furnished to a high standard. Children's bedrooms reflect their individual needs. A child said: 'This is definitely the best home I have ever lived in.' The garden provides children with a nice space to spend time in but is not fenced in on all sides. This increases the risk of children accessing the road outside or others coming on to the property without authorisation. However, there have been no incidents involving these issues. Consequently, these issues have not had an impact on the children or on the security of the home to date.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The interim manager has been leading the home for five months. She demonstrates strong, child-centred practice and leads by example. She is an experienced residential manager and is suitably qualified. The interim manager has applied for registration with Ofsted.

Leadership and management of the home has lacked consistency prior to the current interim manager taking up the post. Two registered managers have left the company in the previous 12 months. Staff and children speak highly of the interim manager. A member of staff said: 'We had lost our way a bit, but the new manager has put us back on the right track.'

There is good management oversight by the interim manager. She is supported by the responsible individual and other staff with a quality assurance role within the organisation. This team of individuals works well together to evaluate the quality of care and promote good outcomes for children.

Staff vacancies have been managed through the regular use of a small group of non-permanent staff in order to ensure that children are cared for by a consistent group of staff. with a small group of non-permanent staff used regularly to ensure that children are cared for by a consistent group of staff. Staff receive regular supervision of their practice. Staff new to the home are supported by a structured probationary period and a review of their practice and learning. One non-permanent member of staff, who has undertaken a significant role in the team to fill staff vacancies, has not been supervised. As a result, this non-permanent member of staff has not had the formal support and challenge to ensure that they undertake their role effectively.

Staff are supported to gain the skills they need to deliver a good quality of care to children through training. The interim manager identified the need for staff to receive additional training to meet the needs of a child coming to live at the home. She worked with the clinical team to arrange input for the full staff team. This supports staff to work with a child in a way which meets her cognitive and sensory needs.

The interim manager is a good advocate for children. She is tenacious in her efforts to build good communication with other relevant professionals. She holds people to account for their responsibilities to contribute to the experiences and progress of 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, 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; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This relates to ensuring that the registered person makes sure that delegated authority forms are signed and dated by the responsible local authority officer and are subject to review.	15 April 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.	15 April 2022

(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(b))

This relates to the registered person ensuring that children who are not in full-time education are provided with educational activities which promote learning, and ensuring that they have written confirmation of the use of each child's pupil premium monies from the education provider.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that practice in relation to identification and review of risk supports staff and children to understand changes in risk levels over time, and enables staff to identify trends and patterns. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- The registered person should ensure that regular bank and agency staff receive supervision of their practice which supports them to provide a good quality of care to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2).
- The registered person should ensure that perimeter fencing is in place which reduces the risks to children in relation to the road outside the property and deters other people from entering the grounds of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1).

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 WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Paul Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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