

SC2589392

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 private children's home provides care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that children living in this home may have a range of social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. They all spoke to the inspectors about their experiences living in the home.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted. The care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 15 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2022	Full	Good
02/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's experiences are varied. They say they like living in the home, but their experiences are not always positive. Children have been supported to develop trusting relationships with staff, but they have not been supported to maintain positive relationships with each other. Group living dynamics are not well managed. This negatively impacts on the experiences and progress for all children living in the home.

The home is not a welcoming environment for children. At the time of the inspection, the kitchen presented as unclean. There was noticeable damage to internal walls, doors and flooring and the skirting boards were missing. A window was observed to be broken and damaged furniture had not been replaced. Children's bedrooms were not well maintained and repairs in the home had not been completed in a timely manner. This does not enable children to develop a sense of belonging or to feel cared for.

Education in the home is not promoted. Children on reduced timetables are not encouraged and supported with informal learning opportunities outside of school. As a result, children were often left in their bedrooms throughout the school day. This limits children's future employment opportunities and aspirations.

Efforts have been made to meet children's health needs. However, when children refuse to attend health appointments, staff have missed opportunities to explore the reasons for this or support children with any worries they may have.

Staff support the children to see people who are important to them and encourage positive experiences. Children are encouraged to engage in activities with staff and have enjoyed trips away, camping and caravanning.

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

There are significant shortfalls in safeguarding practices in the home. Children's risks and vulnerabilities are not well understood or well managed. Children's plans are not individualised and contain conflicting information. Plans do not include clear strategies for staff to follow to keep the children safe.

When considering children living together, managers have not included an assessment of how they will support and keep children with similar risks safe. This means that children are at increased risk of harm.

Leaders and managers have failed to identify significant incidents of bullying in the home. This has resulted in children being subject to aggressive and intimidating behaviours from other children. When incidents have occurred, staff responses have

been inappropriate and opportunities to support children to understand appropriate boundaries and behaviours have been missed.

Staff have struggled to respond effectively when children experience difficulties in regulating their emotions. They have failed to prevent situations from escalating and there have been several incidents of the police being called to the home to manage children's behaviour. This not only places children at risk of harm but has the potential for children to be criminalised.

Incidents of children going missing are not always responded to in line with children's plans. This has resulted in children being reported as missing later than their agreed times. Return home interviews have not taken place consistently. This is a missed opportunity to seek the children's views and promote their welfare.

Shortfalls in management oversight have led to ineffective action to address staff practice and to ensure that children's safety is prioritised. This includes leaders and managers not taking appropriate action to investigate allegations that children have been harmed. When children have been physically restrained, managers do not review incidents to ensure that staff practice is appropriate and intervention has been used as a last resort to protect children. This reduces opportunities to review practice in the home and to identify any learning.

Medication records are unclear. One child's medication record contained different dosages for staff to administer. The manager had also failed to identify that staff training in the administration of medication and first aid had expired. The manager acknowledged this as unsafe practice.

The manager was unable to evidence that new staff had been shown the fire evacuation procedures. It was also not clear if children left the home during planned evacuations or remained in their bedrooms. This compromises children's safety.

Safer recruitment practices are not adhered to. Managers have not ensured that all required documentation including identification has been received. This means that managers cannot be assured that staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager is appropriately experienced and is working towards her management qualification in residential childcare. She is supported by the responsible individual. However, leaders and managers have failed to inspire or promote a culture that is professionally curious. The lack of clear leadership and guidance in the home has had a detrimental impact on the quality of the care provided to children.

Leaders and managers have missed opportunities to advocate for children. They have not escalated requests for information or provided professional challenge to others when there have been concerns of children being at risk. As a result, staff do not have access to up-to-date statutory plans for all children. This prevents children

from receiving the correct level of support and impacts on the quality of care being provided.

Monitoring systems are not robust and do not enable the manager to have effective oversight or to identify shortfalls. The manager does not adequately evaluate incidents in the home. This limits opportunities for reflection and learning.

Staff receive regular supervision and are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, the registered manager has not been regularly supervised. This does not ensure that the manager has adequate support or that their practice is reviewed.

The manager undertakes an internal review of the quality of care. The report does not improve the quality of care delivered to children and the objectives identified for improvement are not specific or measurable. This reduces the capacity of the management team to reflect on and secure improvement in the home.

The manager has access to reports completed by an independent visitor. Despite relevant actions identified by the visitor, these areas are not always explored by the manager. This means that oversight and potential improvement are limited.

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 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(c)(i)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that all areas of the home are well maintained, children have access to all necessities such as televisions and adequate	4 August 2023

furnishings in their personal space. Also, that food is accessible for children at all times. The manager must also ensure that staff are aware of the home's aims and outcomes, children's welfare is promoted and they are supported to achieve their full potential.	
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— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; 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; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)vii)(x)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that there are clear plans in place to support children with informal	4 August 2023

learning opportunities when they are on reduced timetables. Also, that staff are aware of and support children to attain their educational targets. Specifically, managers must ensure that they advocate for children and escalate requests for personal and education healthcare plans.	
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable;	4 August 2023

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(xii)(xiii)(b)) Specifically, the manager must ensure that positive relationships between children are promoted and that any incidents of bullying are followed up with consistent and targeted direct work. Also, the manager must ensure that children are supported to understand the importance of positive relationships as well as the signs of exploitative and harmful relationships.	
*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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and 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.	4 August 2023

(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that risk plans include children's individual risks and include clear strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe; that staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and are able to appropriately respond to indicators of exploitation; that concerns relating to children's safety are shared with relevant agencies in a timely manner, and that incidents of bullying and aggression between children are managed appropriately; and that staff seek opportunities to support children to understand their risks, vulnerabilities and behaviours.	
*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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulations 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	4 August 2023

Specifically, that the registered person must ensure that all staff are adequately trained and have the knowledge and experience to support children in their care; that there is robust management oversight of practice in the home; that the monitoring and evaluation of records is effective and allows for the identification of patterns and trends; and that recommendations by independent monitoring services are actioned in a timely manner.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose; 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; that each child’s relevant plans are followed; that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(c)(e)(i)) The specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all children have up-to-date local authority care plans in place to inform their care. Also, that when there have been meetings regarding children’s care, these are accurately reflected throughout records.	4 August 2023

When considering children living together, managers must ensure that they take into account and evidence how the risks of all children will be safely managed.	
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— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that when children have been offered and refused medication, this must be recorded.	4 August 2023
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(27) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) The registered person must ensure that staff working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. Also, that children are involved in fire drills.	4 August 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 is of integrity and good character;	4 August 2023

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all disclosures are assessed against the impact on children and that proof of identification is kept on file for all staff.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the manager receives supervision in line with the organisation's supervision policy.	4 August 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred;	4 August 2023

provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, that the registered person must ensure that there is clear accountability of reporting an allegation. Also, that allegations are reported without delay and investigated in accordance with allegations management procedures.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)) Specifically, that the registered person must ensure that holds are evaluated by someone who was not involved in the intervention.	4 August 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))	4 August 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC2589392

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park,
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Responsible individual: Alexander Scott

Registered manager: Andrea Wilkinson

Inspectors

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector
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