

2702209

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 operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for three children who have lived through adverse childhood experiences.

The registered manager's post has been vacant since February 2024. A manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted. The responsible individual post is also vacant.

The child living in the home was present at times during the inspection but did not want to speak to the inspector.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

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: 20 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home can accommodate up to three children; however, managers made the decision to care for only one child with the agreement of the child's local authority. This means that they cannot admit any other children into the home. The child has lived at the home for over a year and is settled and making significant progress. Staff and the child celebrated this milestone by having a party. This was important given the child's past experiences.

A child's concerns were not acted on quickly. This may mean that the child does not feel listened to or that their views are valued. Additionally, staff actions meant that a child was restrained. This could have been avoided. The manager oversight of these incidents was poor and did not identify the shortfalls in practice. The child experienced upset and trauma during these incidents. However, lessons have been learned and practice is improving.

The child's teachers said the child is doing well in school. Staff provide support with the child's learning and will often ask for additional work to enable the child to meet academic targets. They attend all of the education meetings and are fully aware of the child's learning needs, barriers to learning and how best to support the child. The child attends and enjoys various after-school clubs and other activities within the community, such as youth clubs, go-karting and trampolining.

The child enjoys positive relationships with staff. Staff and managers ask about the child's school day on arrival from school. The child is also welcomed with a warm cuddle and is pleased to show the staff certificates from school for good behaviour.

Staff support the child's expression of their wishes and feelings through spending quality time together and having important discussions that support the child in their day-to-day care.

Staff support the child to spend quality time with close family and friends. The child has opportunities to play with friends in the local community, at the home and local parks. This supports the child in maintaining and building positive relationships with those that matter to them. They are building their self-esteem and confidence too.

The home has recently been decorated. However, there are still some areas that need improvement because they are not yet welcoming. Maintenance work has been slow and some work completed has been to a poor standard. However, the new responsible individual has escalated concerns and the timeliness and quality of maintenance work is starting to improve.

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

Staff and the manager are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures and mostly notify relevant managers and agencies, such as social workers, the local authority designated officer and the police, without delay. However, on one occasion, there was a delay in staff notifying managers of an allegation of abuse against two members of staff. This meant that the staff continued working with the child without any safety measures being put in place.

Once managers were made aware, they notified relevant agencies who then spoke with the child via telephone. This was three days after the allegation, and the child's description of events had become vague. Managers completed an internal investigation, and the child withdrew one allegation but maintained the other. Managers failed to show caution and reinstated the member of staff without putting any risk assessments or safeguards in place. This poor practice has the potential to place children at risk of significant harm and can make children feel not listened to or valued. However, staff completed additional safeguarding children training and managers say that they have taken learning from this incident.

Since the last inspection, there have been four incidents when physical restraint has been used. Records showed that two of the incidents could have been avoided had staff and the manager taken a different course of action when supporting the child. Their actions appear to have evoked some emotions in the child, which then led to negative behaviours escalating to the point where restraint was required.

Records of restraints are poorly written and do not provide evidence that staff use de-escalation techniques to avoid using physical restraint. Staff do not always receive debriefs from the registered person. There was one occasion when the child was debriefed via telephone. The manager's oversight of incidents is poor. It has not identified most of the shortfalls raised by the inspector and does not evaluate the effectiveness of the restraint. This does not support keeping children safe or managers addressing any shortfalls in staff practice.

The annual review of the home's fire risk assessment is overdue by two months. Managers' report that this is scheduled to be completed in a couple of weeks. Managers have not taken action to address all the recommendations from the last fire risk assessment. For example, one of the children's bedroom doors is still missing part of the intumescent seal, and the games room fire door was not closing adequately. As a result, it was not compliant with fire regulations. Managers addressed the issue with the fire door during the inspection when the inspector brought the shortfall to their attention.

Staff have good, positive relationships with the child. This has supported the child in expressing historical concerns regarding their past trauma and experiences, which staff have managed appropriately.

Safer recruitment is now compliant with regulations, which means that the child is only cared for by safe adults.

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

The registered manager's post has been vacant since February 2024. The current manager has only been overseeing the home since March 2024. She was previously the deputy manager of the home and raised concerns that she was not supported with her professional development.

The manager does not have extensive management experience and needs support to undertake the role of being a manager effectively. Senior managers did not ensure that the manager received a planned induction when she was appointed for the role. The manager was not sure if she was still in her probationary phase, as these discussions had not yet taken place with her supervisors. She has also not been receiving regular supervision, which is concerning given how new she is to the role.

The monitoring of the service needs improvement to ensure that staff and the manager can continue to provide the child with consistent support. Staff have not all received specialist training that is tailored to meet the child's specific needs.

Two staff members have not been able to achieve their relevant qualifications within the recommended timescales. This does not support them in meeting the child's needs effectively.

The quality-of-care report shared with the regulator was poor. The report was very descriptive and failed to give an evaluation of any patterns, trends or themes during the reporting period or any lessons learned.

Staff feel supported by the manager and feel proud of her as she has managed to recruit a full staff team following several months of being short-staffed and reliant on casual workers.

Teachers were complimentary about how well the manager and staff communicate and work with them, which has helped the child to feel settled at home and at school and to make significant progress. The manager and staff are enthusiastic about their roles and have the child's best interests at heart.

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 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— 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) This specifically relates to staff reporting, without delay, any allegations that children make to a manager and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to ensure children remain safe.	30 September 2024
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;	30 September 2024

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This specifically relates to staff having training that meets the needs of the children in their care. The manager has good oversight of incident records.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the manager takes effective action to ensure the home is compliant with fire regulations.	30 September 2024
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the manager receives a planned induction and effective regular supervision to support her in her role.	30 September 2024
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).	30 September 2024

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. 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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b)(c) (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff complete the appropriate qualification within timescales.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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	30 September 2024

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

This specifically relates to ensuring that records pertaining to physical intervention are completed as per this regulation.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive. The home should also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2702209

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Venture House Prospect Business Park 12 Prospect Park, Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Post vacant.

Registered Manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, Social Care Inspector

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