

2702209

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. One child was living at the home at the time of the inspection and was spoken to by the inspector.

The registered manager left their post in February 2024. A new manager was appointed but left their post in November 2024 before they were registered. At the time of the inspection, an interim manager had been appointed, and they plan to apply for registration.

Inspection date: 19 December 2024

Date of last inspection: 9 July 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The child lives in a well-maintained, comfortable and welcoming environment. Staff and the manager work hard to create a home that is enjoyable to live in. There are photos around the home that add to the homely feel. In addition, staff encourage the child to personalise their bedroom with images of their favourite football teams on the wall. The child takes great pride in their home environment, and incidents of damage to the home have reduced.

Staff and the manager show genuine care and love towards the child. This helps the child to build trusting relationships with the adults caring for them and creates a safe place for them to live. The staff's nurturing response has led to a reduction in physical interventions and allegations, with none since the last inspection.

Staff help the child to have positive routines. The child consistently attends school and makes steady progress against their educational targets. Staff take the child to various after-school activities, including swimming, football and forest school. This helps the child to develop social skills and friendships and boosts their self-esteem.

The manager actively listens to the child's wishes, helping them feel valued and respected. These have included plans for the child's birthday party, which were acted on, and their parent was invited. As well as listening to the child, this supported them to see their family and created a positive experience for them to remember.

Staff support the child to eat healthily. A staff member instigated the idea of a tuck shop to encourage the child to make healthy choices after school. This helps the child to think about healthier food choices. However, the staff and manager lock some food items away in the kitchen to stop the child accessing certain foods. This does not provide a nurturing response to the child's needs.

The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the child's vulnerabilities and potential risks posed to them. The child requires specialist therapeutic help to support their understanding of appropriate boundaries, but there has been a significant delay in the child accessing this. In the interim, the manager and staff recently attended specific training to improve their awareness of and responses to this risk. However, there has been a lack of work with the child in relation to keeping themselves safe. This means the manager and staff do not follow or support the child's care plan fully, and the child's vulnerability is increased.

Staff understand the child protection policy and know how to report a safeguarding concern. Following shortfalls identified in this area during the previous inspection,

the manager has undertaken work with staff to help increase their knowledge. This ensures that the child is protected from harm.

Improvements have been made to the induction process for the new manager as well as the staff who have recently joined the team. The manager is highly committed to ensuring good levels of care for the child. Staff feel well supported and valued. The new manager accesses regular support from senior managers, which helps him to implement new ways of working.

Most staff now hold the required qualification for residential childcare. A small number of staff are currently working to achieve this qualification. However, one member of staff is unable to achieve their qualification within the timescale. The previous manager did not escalate this matter with the staff member or the examination board. The new manager has created a review date to ensure the staff member completes their qualification within a realistic timeframe.

The new manager is honest and reflective and shows an understanding of the home's strengths and areas of development. He has a clear vision of how he wants to improve the care provided, and this is already having a positive effect on the child's experiences, auditing processes and staff morale.

The manager recognises that staff do not fully understand the therapeutic parenting model outlined in the home's statement of purpose. This means staff do not provide consistent therapeutic responses to the child. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/11/2023	Full	Good

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 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to the manager and staff having regular conversations with children to support them to understand and reduce risks in line with their care plans.	24 January 2025
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate	3 February 2025

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.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—

does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or

works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))

This specifically relates to the manager having a clear overview of completion timeframes for staff's qualifications to avoid drift and delay.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. This includes being clear about models of care that staff are trained in and are used at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)
- The registered person should ensure the home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. However, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than institutional impression. The rationale for food being locked away should be reviewed and consideration given to less restrictive ways of managing a child's food intake. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: Alexander Scott

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Caoimhe Richards, Social Care Inspector

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