

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>08 and 9/06/2015</b>                                                                          |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC483710</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                                                      |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                                                           |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Horizon Care and Education Group Limited</b>                                                  |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, CANNOCK, Staffordshire, WS11 0LG</b> |

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Mr Paul Callander</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Vacant</b>            |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Mrs Mary Timms</b>    |

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| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>08/06/2015</b>                                                       |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>This is the first inspection of this service since registration.</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                                                                            | <b>None</b>                                                             |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                                                                                     |                                                                         |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                            | <b>Inadequate</b>                                                       |
| There are serious failures that mean young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and their care and experiences are poor. |                                                                         |
| <b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                         | <b>Inadequate</b>                                                       |
| <b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                | <b>Inadequate</b>                                                       |

**SC483710**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is inadequate because:**

- Weak leadership of this new service has impacted negatively on the young people. The home opened without having adequate numbers of permanent staff to support the needs of the two young people admitted, resulting in a heavy reliance on seconded, casual and agency staff cover. This has led to a lack of continuity for young people. Also, the lack of effectiveness in behaviour management and boundary setting has been affected by the inexperience of some staff.
- There has been a concerning number of serious incidents since the home opened. For example, assaults on staff, young people obtaining car keys and attempting to use them and also gaining access to the safe.
- Young people have until recently lacked confidence in the care that they receive. They have at times felt unsafe and that 'staff did not care'. They also expressed concern about how quickly the police have been called to incidents, which in their eyes was not always necessary. Whilst relationships between staff and young people have recently improved greatly, feelings of mistrust had previously prevented young people building the positive relationships necessary to enable them to settle quickly into their placements and to make progress.
- A key concern for this inspection is the failure by the service to safeguard young people. A young person spoke openly during the inspection about a night where they had left the home in the early evening and that staff were unaware they were missing until the following morning. The then Registered Manager and staff team were aware of this incident and yet it was not reported to the placing authority.

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Due date    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>The registered person must maintain records for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child ensure that these are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. On this occasion this relates to item 14 of Schedule 3: The date and circumstances of all incidents where a child goes missing from the home, including any information relating to the child's whereabouts during the period of absence.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a-c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1 July 2015 |
| <p>12 The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure -</p> <p>12 (2)(a) that staff -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) 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;</li> <li>(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm</li> <li>(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare</li> </ul> <p>(b) 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.</p> | 1 July 2015 |
| 14 The care planning standard                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1 July 2015 |

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| <p>In order to meet the care planning standard, in particular to ensure that individual needs are clearly identified across both care and risk management planning documents, the registered person must ensure that:</p> <p>(1)(a) That children receive well-planned care in or through the children's home.</p>                                                                                        |                    |
| <p>13 The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(a) 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.</p> <p>(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> | <p>1 July 2015</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that the independent person's report sets out their opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarding and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (4a and 4b))</p>                                                                                                                                            | <p>1 July 2015</p> |

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

Any staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' should have substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home and have successfully completed their induction for the home in which they are employed. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.21)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a large private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| None            |                 |                      |

## Inspection Judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>inadequate</b> |
| <p>Relationships between the staff group and young people have, until recently, been poor, which has impacted negatively on young people and has restricted the progress they have made. They say that at times poor relationships with staff have left them feeling vulnerable, identifying individual staff that they 'disliked' and describing poor relationships as a key reason for some incidents escalating. However, they say that this has now changed, that since the new manager arrived they now have very positive relationships with key members of staff. Both young people say that have noted recent changes in the way the home operates, which they embrace. Comments from young people include 'yes I now like it here and want to stay, I am happy here'. Recent improvements have resulted in a more stable environment, improved engagement with young people about care planning, improved school attendance and a reduction in the number of incidents. While improvements made are seen as positive, the overall experiences of young people to date have been turbulent, which has restricted their personal development and has impacted negatively on their view of the care system.</p> <p>The progress made by young people in relation to education is slow and in some cases poor. One young person had zero days school attendance during the first three months of their placement, as a result educational progress has been poor. When asked about this the young person said 'no one arranged it and I just said 'no' when asked, and no-one cared. It's different now because the new manager and staff want me to go and say I must go'. This young person is now attending school and showing a real interest in improving their educational attendance and achievement. Another young person was attending well, however, more recently there has been a breakdown in education arrangements. Staff are working with involved professionals to finalise new arrangements for this young person. In the interim period the team are endeavouring to facilitate some informal education and are incorporating educational activities, such as budgeting, into daily routines.</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to have a voice in the day-to-day running of the home. For example, menu planning and choosing activities. They have taken part in trips to theme parks and engage in some activities in the home. Young people's artwork is displayed in the home. This is as a result of a request made in a young people's meeting. Some young people choose to spend large periods of time away from the home socialising with friends, rather than engaging in more organised activities. The arrangements around this have improved as young people are now sharing more detail about who they are with and confirming return details. This means that staff are more able to understand how they spend their time away</p> |                   |

from the home in-line with good parenting expectations. Young people are beginning to develop independent living skills and improved personal hygiene routines.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>inadequate</b> |
| <p>Young people have not been fully safeguarded. A number of shortfalls in service provision have left young people vulnerable and inadequately protected. The staff team recognise that improvements were needed and welcome the changes made by strengthened leadership and management over the last five weeks. Comments from staff include 'I have looked back and am now thinking that some of the incidents probably happened because xx felt unsafe'.</p> <p>This inspection finds one particular incident as key evidence of the poor safeguarding arrangements operated by this home that has resulted in young people being put at risk of harm. A young person spoke freely about an incident where they left the home during the early evening and said that they were not missed until the following morning. When asked how this made them feel they responded 'like they did not care'. The staff team were fully aware of this incident and yet had not recorded it as a formal missing event or reported it as such to the placing team. As a result of poor management oversight there had been no review of practice, nor had risk assessments been updated, or management strategies developed to reduce the likelihood of a repeat event. This demonstrates a failure to recognise the many potential risks for this young person and a lack of compliance with multi-agency and internal safeguarding procedures. This issue was immediately addressed on inspection.</p> <p>Shortfalls in care planning have affected how safeguarding arrangements have been effectively implemented. For example, there has been a failure to reflect in a young person's plan any information about a relationship they have outside of the home and the associated address. Considering the young person has been known to visit this address when away from the home, without consent, this is particularly important.</p> <p>Known and potential risks are not effectively identified through a thorough risk assessment process. This means that staff are not provided with the appropriate guidance to inform practice in a manner which keeps young people safe. Additionally, confusing information is reflected in areas of risk management plans. For example, one document identifies a young person as high risk due to being age 15, with no further explanatory information, and at medium risk due to a</p> |                   |

history of involvement with drugs and gang culture, again, with no explanation as to this inconsistency.

Decision making in relation to young people absent from the home fails to ensure their protection. For example, young people appear to have been guided to use public transport to return to the home late at night after failing to return as agreed, with no clarity that this was a risk assessed decision.

There have been serious incidents at the home where the police had to be called. However, the young people felt that the reasons why they were called had not been addressed to enable them to reflect and understand why this was necessary. They spoke about being unhappy about how often the police have been called and feel that threats have also been made to call the police, often very quickly, and 'for everything'. A police officer contributing to this inspection says that while he previously had some emerging concerns about the management of behaviours, that this has now changed. The number of incidents involving the police has reduced and he was reassured by the strengthened leadership and management.

Young people say that they have not always felt safe. However, they are very clear when spoken with that this has changed over the last few weeks. They link this directly to the recently strengthened leadership and management of the home and show renewed confidence in all aspects of their care

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Inadequate</b> |
| <p>There has been an early change to the management of this home. The Registered Manager in post when the home opened in February 2015 has now moved to a new role. The provider very quickly moved across a very experienced manager into this home, who it is understood is completing an application for the Registered Manager position.</p> <p>Young people were admitted into this newly registered service without adequate numbers of permanent staff being in place. As a result there has been a reliance on temporary staff, who were either seconded, on casual contracts or agency. Also newly recruited staff have been predominantly inexperienced and unqualified. This has resulted in undue pressure on the small number of experienced, qualified staff. They have faced a pattern of having to induct and support new staff rather than concentrate their attention on young people. Furthermore decision making about staff allocation has at times been poor. For example, an agency staff member on their first shift was left at the home caring for a young person who was known to present complex behaviours, and during this period a serious incident occurred.</p> |                   |

Also, a staff member who had not completed their probationary period had been left in charge, supported solely by a new to the home agency member of staff. A lack of experienced and regular staff has meant that at times young people's needs have gone unmet.

Leaders and managers initially failed to effectively monitor this newly registered service. As a result serious incidents were not been picked up by the provider organisation, for example the event when a young person was missing overnight with staff being unaware. Required monitoring by an independent person takes place, however, does not fulfil the requirements of reporting on the quality of service provided. For example the two reports submitted to Ofsted to date have failed to show that safeguarding incidents and young people's progress with education have been explored and lacks evaluation of the visitor's view of the quality of care provided in these areas.

Poor record keeping means that the quality of care provided is difficult to follow or assess and there is a lack of evidence to show how some events have been followed up. Clear omissions in recording are also found. For example the incident when a young person was missing from the home overnight is not captured in their personal records as a missing event in the manner required by regulation. This suggests a low priority has been given to this serious incident and is at least part of the reason why external managers were unaware of the event.

The home's statement of purpose states that the home is registered to care for young people with complex needs, challenging behaviours and learning disabilities. While there is no concern that the home has admitted anyone whose primary need is a disability, this statement is incorrect as the home is not registered for this category and this document has been adjusted since registration. There are additional errors such as the details of the local safeguarding children board being the incorrect local authority, which suggests that information had been cut and pasted from another document.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

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