

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	28/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC483710
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Horizon Care and Education Group Limited
Registered person address	Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, CANNOCK, Staffordshire, WS11 0LG

Responsible individual	Ann-Cheri Callow
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Mary Timms

Inspection date	28/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC483710

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Young people are not yet making good progress. They frequently refuse to attend educational arrangements. As a result, they are not achieving their potential.
- Some young people spend excessive amounts of time away from the home socialising with friends. The resulting lack of contact with staff restricts the scope for good progress to be made.
- Engagement with involved professionals for some young people is poor, which influences the effectiveness of individual care planning.
- While the interim manager has acted to drive forward service improvements since the inspection in June 2015, further time and additional work is required to fully embed recent developments into practice.
- The management of the home is again unstable. This is because there has already been one change in manager since the home opened in February 2015 and another change is imminent.

The children's home strengths

- Young people now have an improved confidence in their care and for the most part have very positive relationships with staff.
- The team remain committed and want only the best for young people. The use of agency staff has reduced and new staff are developing their skills and knowledge.
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents and there is effective partnership working with the police.

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
13. The Leadership and Management Standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must: (1) enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that- (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare (2) (f) 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.	4/8/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a large private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home was first registered in February 2015.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
8/9 June 2015	Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Progress for some young people is hindered by the extensive time they spend away from the home, which means they have very restricted contact with staff and services. Others say that they now have good relationships with staff team members which has assisted them to settle into their placements and begin to take advantage of some of the services and opportunities available to them. Activities are not always effectively planned and as a result young people are not engaging in a broad range of stimulating or developmental activities. There have been early discussions with young people about summer holiday ideas, however, the school break is well underway, and no plans have been finalised. While some activities have taken place these are often last minute arrangements such as a walk out or a trip to the shops. There is a broad acceptance that some young people prefer not to try new things or undertake activities with staff. The outcome for young people in relation to education is not yet good. The team have worked with involved professionals, timetables have been adjusted in response to changing needs and wishes and yet young people's attendance and engagement is sporadic and remains a concern. Looking forward, improved timetables have been developed for the coming term and staff are talking positively to young people with a view to improving their engagement in education. When young people do refuse to attend education the team set an expectation that some time is spent on educational work and encourage engagement in learning activities. Young people are encouraged to develop their independent living skills. They each manage their own laundry, and are expected to keep their rooms clean and tidy. They are encouraged to prepare their own snacks and help with cooking and shopping. As a result young people are starting to develop the skills they will need to live independently in the future. Young people's improved confidence in care arrangements was apparent in discussion. Comments include, 'things are better here now, because of the manager and the staff'. Young people have welcomed the reduced number of different people working in the home, which was identified as an issue of concern to them at the last inspection. Young people are supported to visit health professionals as needs arise and attend for expected check-ups with a dentist and optician. The manager has recently developed links with the looked after child nursing team. This has led to a nurse	

visiting the home to provide additional health monitoring and support for individual needs. Comments from the nursing team confirm that staff show a good awareness of young people's individual health needs.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Young people say that they feel safe and confirm they feel comfortable to raise concerns with staff if they need to. Staff try to engage young people in conversations to improve their own protective behaviours. Some young people continue to show disinterest in engaging with staff in constructive work. This highlights a need to develop new and effective strategies in order to promote fully young people's safety and well-being. There has been a marked reduction in the number of serious incidents since the time of the last inspection. Comments from the local police reflect a reduction in the number of times they have been contacted by the service. They also confirm that there is effective joint working with the team. There have been no incidents requiring the use of physical intervention and sanctions are proportionate and used rarely. There has been no formal missing from care incidents since the last inspection. Staff always endeavour to maintain contact with young people who are found to be absent without consent. Absences are reported to the placing team and to the police when identified as necessary. The manager monitors the response made by the team when young people have been absent and acts to improve practice if required. This helps keep young people safe. The protection of young people is strengthened by the actions taken following the inspection in June 2015. The additional guidance and management direction provided to staff has ensured they understand their roles and responsibilities in the protection of young people. Staff are now confident to voice a concern or to question decision making should they feel a safeguarding issue had not been addressed.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

Leaders and managers have worked very openly with Ofsted since the last inspection and show that they now recognise and understand service weaknesses. Broad plans identify on-going service development. For example, the production of an improved workforce strategy has led to the recent appointment of four new care staff which will reduce the need to use agency staff and provides improved consistency for young people. Alongside this strengthened permanent team, the regional manager is working with employment agencies to agree minimum expectations of experience and training for agency staff. Work in progress also includes the strengthening of care planning by re-defining the keyworker role and improving management monitoring to ensure work is effective.

Leaders and managers have made changes but know that further work is required to ensure the outcomes for young people and the quality of care are improved. A requirement has been set against the leadership quality standard to ensure that initiated improvements are fully implemented and sustained by the registered person.

This inspection finds that while further service development is necessary the immediate actions taken to address the previous breaches of regulation and quality standards show good progress. In particular, this has led to improved protection strategies for young people, for example, ensuring that each member of staff is aware when young people are in or out of the home. In addition, the quality of external management monitoring visits and reporting has improved. As a result, the provider organisation is more able to understand the quality of service provided, thus enabling them to be in an informed position to take action if necessary.

The team show resilience. There have been no changes to the core team of care staff who remain committed to their role. The staff have a caring attitude and want only the best outcomes for young people. They are confident in the interim manager and talk positively about the recent support and guidance provided to them. Comments from staff include 'I am confident in the manager which has led to me feeling more confident in my role'.

The interim manager and the regional service manager have worked with the team to ensure that they fully comprehend the home's Statement of Purpose, to identify learning points and to drive forward service development.

A further change to the management of the home is imminent. At the time of the last inspection in June 2015, the registered manager had left his position and an interim manager appointed. This situation is changing very soon as this manager has now resigned. The home is again vulnerable to further instability at a time when service development is key. Reassurances are given by the provider organisation that an appropriate person will always be in day-to-day charge while recruitment for a permanent manager is undertaken.

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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