

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>27/09/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1226975</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Horizon Care &amp; Education Group Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Horizon Care &amp; Education Group, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LG</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Cheri Callow</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Kelly Ford</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Mary Timms</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>27/09/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</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>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

**1226975**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Young people are very settled and happy. They are each making positive progress from their starting points on admission. Parents and professionals have a very positive view of the quality of service.
- The homely and relaxed environment provides young people with a supportive base from which they begin to access the help and services that they need.
- Young people feel safe. While there are still incidents and behaviours which may put young people at risk of harm, these are well managed and have reduced in number, demonstrating that young people are safer since they have moved to this home.
- There are very positive relationships between staff and young people. Each young person speaks positively about the staff and says that they feel supported by the care that they receive.
- While there are no identified negative outcomes for young people, areas of weakness are found. There is no current protocol or staff guidance to ensure that medication that may be required when a young person is away from the home is always available. Staff do not always complete medication records when a young person has refused their medication. Complaints are consistently and effectively investigated, but outcome statements are not always recorded, as required by regulation. Improvements in placement planning for individual young people are necessary. This is to ensure that records demonstrate that current needs are promptly incorporated into plans and identified work is completed effectively.

## 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>(1) In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children:</p> <p>(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the need to ensure that plans are updated promptly when a need changes, plans appropriately clarify the detail of work to be undertaken and the quality and effectiveness of work undertaken is always monitored and evaluated.</p>	28/10/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation.</p> <p>(Regulation 39 (3))</p>	28/10/2016

### Recommendations

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

- Ensure that records are kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- Ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. In particular, this relates to the need to develop a protocol and staff guidance to ensure that medication which may be required when a young person is away from the home is immediately available to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

## 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.

The home was re-registered with Ofsted in February 2016 to reflect a change in the limited company status within the organisation providing this home.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the first inspection of this service since registration		

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>Young people benefit from good quality and very child-centred care. Parents and professionals say that young people are happy and settled. Young people all speak positively about their care. One young person, talking about the staff, said: 'They are always there for you, no matter what.'</p> <p>Good, structured, arrangements are put in place for the admission of new residents. A young person reflecting on when they came to live at the home said that they felt welcome, and that staff were very caring when they first moved in. This experience puts young people in a positive position to settle quickly and to feel able to accept help and support from the placement.</p> <p>Young people feel listened to and that their views are valued. They are encouraged to make choices about activities and menu planning, and to contribute to decisions about the home, such as decor. They contribute to care planning and are supported to have their say during review meetings. Staff talk to young people about issues as they arise and undertake planned work to address individual needs. There are some weaknesses in the linking of this work to placement plans, which are reported on further under leadership and management. Staff use their imagination and work creatively when young people resist the offer to talk, and use other opportunities, such as car journeys, to promote a relaxed but also focused discussion time. This has proved particularly successful for one young person.</p> <p>Young people contribute to household tasks and are expected to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy. They have bank accounts. This helps them to learn about personal financial management. They help with food shopping and food preparation. As a result, they develop skills and disciplines that they will need when they live independently in the future. The manager is currently planning more structured, independence learning opportunities for young people, which will be tailored to support individuals' development at the appropriate pace. As well as promoting the development of practical skills, the team works tirelessly with young people to improve social skills and to promote effective learning about rights and responsibilities. As a result, young people become more self-aware and improve in confidence. For some, this is a slow process. As one social worker described, it can be: 'Three steps forward and then two back.' However, staff do not give up, working creatively to ensure that young people understand important messages.</p> <p>While none of the young people engage in outside groups or regular sporting activities, many opportunities are offered. Recently two young people did go out for the day to a theme park, which was enjoyed greatly, and staff are hopeful this</p>	

can be repeated. One of the young people has a strong social peer group and spends leisure time out with friends, as a preference to structured activities. This promotes their social development. Staff are mindful of the individual issues which have an impact on how easily young people are able to engage in outside activities. Staff are working to improve self-esteem and confidence in order that each young person is able to take part in, and learn from, new social experiences.

Education is prioritised. Each young person has an individual education package, agreed with placing teams and education professionals. When there is delay in accessing this, the staff team steps in to ensure that planning for education is effective. A recent example of this was when the staff team took action to identify an appropriate school for a young person, and initiated liaison with the school about the young person attending. As a result, a young person has been able to start a new school at the beginning of the term. Because of the work undertaken, young people who previously did not engage with education are attending regularly. When staff see that a young person is struggling to maintain a school placement, they act quickly to open communication with relevant teams to address issues in a shared manner.

Young people are generally in good physical health. They attend necessary health appointments and receive routine health checks. Staff have recently become aware that as a service they need to look more closely at young people's diets to support improved weight management, and are discussing ways to take this forward. This shows that the team continually looks for ways to improve young people's health.

Close working with the local authority child and adolescent mental health service is currently effective in ensuring that appropriate and effective decision-making is taking place regarding a young person's complex emotional well-being. The staff also benefit from access to support and guidance from the organisation's own team of mental health professionals. While this team does not currently work directly with young people, they provide consultation opportunities, and recently training in relation to attachment disorders.

The arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are generally safe, and there have been no specific poor outcomes for young people. However, two areas are identified for improvement. A record is not always kept when a young person refuses prescribed medication. There is also no current protocol to ensure that young people have immediate access to prescribed medication that they may need when away from the home.

Staff help young people to maintain family relationships. They work hard to engage family members in care arrangements and to build professional relationships. When young people live a long distance from home, staff support family visits to the home. As a result, parents feel involved, which has a positive impact on the young people. Comments from parents include a reflection on the very good support the team provides during contact times. One parent said: 'They have been brilliant.'

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	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people feel safe and live comfortably in a safe environment. Managers and staff focus heavily on the safety and well-being of young people. A well-developed risk-management structure informs all areas of service delivery and guides staff on the best ways to keep young people safe. Risk-management strategies cover individual needs as well as potential hazards, such as fire safety and external activities. Involved professionals consistently say that care arrangements promote young people’s safety and express confidence in the way that staff follow safeguarding protocols.</p> <p>Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in the protection of young people. Staff have received training in how to recognise when young people are being sexually exploited, which has improved their vigilance and has enabled them to work proactively with young people who may be at risk of harm. Staff work creatively to engage each young person in discussions aimed at educating and empowering them to make safe choices in their everyday lives. Comments from young people show that they are feeling better equipped to address dangers when away from the home. A young person said: ‘I have learned lots that I did not realise before, this will help me keep safe.’ This learning enhances young people’s sense of well-being and security.</p> <p>Good behaviour is encouraged. Young people understand the house rules and individual boundaries. If young people present concerning or unacceptable behaviour, staff address this in a very proactive, firm but also positive manner. One social worker spoke very positively about the progress made by a young person, saying: ‘They have managed to successfully set rules and boundaries, which is a small miracle in itself.’</p> <p>Young people feel able to talk to staff and say that they are confident to raise a concern about the service, if needed. Because of the time and support staff give to young people, each young person has become safer since moving to this home. For some, this means that they are able to follow rules. For others, it has been a reduction in self-harm, going missing and developing an improved understanding of how best to protect themselves from being sexually exploited. When young people have been missing or absent without agreement, staff are proactive in looking for them and try their best to maintain contact. When young people return, they are welcomed back and spoken to about the dangers of going missing from the home.</p>	



	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>An experienced and appropriately qualified registered manager leads the service. Staff are confident in the manager, and say that the team works together extremely well to prioritise young people’s needs.</p> <p>Several areas have been identified as requiring improvement. Firstly, placement planning for young people is not fully effective. This is because of a lack of coordination of the work that takes place, together with plans for young people not always being updated as and when needs change. In addition, plans are not always specific as to how needs are to be met. For example, work around child sexual exploitation is identified as a need, but the plan does not set out the areas of work to be covered. A further weakness, which has the potential to have an impact on young people, is that the quality and effectiveness of one-to-one work is not reviewed or evaluated. Regardless of these weaknesses in planning, it appears that direct work with young people does take place, because staff are so enthusiastic and want to support young people. There is the potential, though, that needs may go unmet without rigorous planning and review of the work taking place, and without this work being monitored by the manager.</p> <p>Complaints are low in number, are taken seriously and are acted upon by the manager, although records kept about each complaint fail to set out the final outcome, which is a requirement of the children’s homes regulations. The weakness in this area does not have an impact on young people, and relates to recording.</p> <p>The manager understands the home’s strengths and is full of praise for the commitment shown by the staff team in its work. The manager has an excellent understanding of the needs of the individual young people and has a good relationship with each of them. While she is always looking for ways to improve the service, the weaknesses identified during this inspection were not identified by current management monitoring systems. This highlights the need to strengthen management oversight processes further.</p> <p>Staff training is seen as important. Staff feel that they have received appropriate training and know that they can request additional training if they feel that this is needed. As well as core training in areas such as fire safety, safeguarding children, food hygiene and behaviour management, additional training is sourced to meet emerging needs. Recently, two staff members have attended training to support children through a court process. This means that they have an improved understanding, which will guide the best and most supportive delivery of care for</p>	

one particular young person.

The manager does not hesitate to represent young people's needs, and advocates for them by challenging external professionals in order to achieve services to meet individual needs. A recent example is the manager stepping in and acting to finalise a school placement, rather than waiting for external professionals. As a result, a young person is now being inducted into a mainstream school placement.

## 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 children looked after 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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