

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/10/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1234243</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 and Education Group Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LG</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Ann-Cheri Callow</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Jacqueline Norbury</b>
<b>Inspectors</b>	<b>Joanne Vyas and Mary Timms</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/10/2016</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>Inadequate</b>
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and 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>

**1234243**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- There are significant weaknesses in the way that staff safeguard children and young people. Children and young people are not adequately protected when they go missing from the home, because staff are not competent in their knowledge of the correct procedures to follow.
- There is a reliance on using agency staff and staff from other homes. This means that children and young people lack a consistent approach to their care and cannot build strong, trusting relationships with those who care for them.
- Some staff lack the skills and knowledge to be able to promote positive behaviour. Challenging and damaging behaviours are not consistently well managed. This means that the police have raised concerns that young people are at risk of harm, and that their resources have to be deployed unnecessarily.
- Some staff do not demonstrate sufficient care for the children and young people, for example not going to them when they are in hospital and leaving them in the custody of the police for long periods of time.
- The registered manager does not work closely with other professionals. Managers do not ensure that staff are provided with the information and documentation that they require to work effectively with the children and young people. Furthermore, social workers are not consulted about internal placement moves. A social worker said that that, if she had been consulted, she would not have agreed to the move of a young person to this home.
- The registered manager does not have the information that she requires to monitor the home effectively, because some incidents are not recorded appropriately.

## 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><b>Engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met</b></p> <p>5. In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>(d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.</p>	02/12/2016
<p><b>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</b></p> <p>7.—(1) The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>(a) develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>(b) engage with them; and</p> <p>(c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p>	02/12/2016
<p><b>The enjoyment and achievement standard</b></p> <p>9.—(1) The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p>	02/12/2016
<p><b>The health and well-being standard</b></p> <p>10.—(1) The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>(b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p>	02/12/2016

<p><b>The protection of children standard</b></p> <p>12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <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>	<p>02/12/2016</p>
<p><b>The leadership and management standard</b></p> <p>13.—(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>(e) ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	<p>02/12/2016</p>
<p><b>The care planning standard</b></p> <p>14.—(1) The care planning standard is that children receive well-planned care from the home and have a positive experience of admission and transition processes.</p>	<p>02/12/2016</p>
<p>Ensure the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home as set out in Schedule 4 is maintained in the home and that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b))</p>	<p>02/12/2016</p>

## **Recommendations**

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

- Ensure that the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Ensure that the use of agency staff is carefully monitored and reviewed so that children receive continuity of care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

## **Full report**

### **Information about this children's home**

This home was re-registered in May this year under new ownership. This is the home's first inspection under its new registration. The home is registered to care for up to three children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is one of a number of homes by owned by a private organisation.

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<p>Children and young people do not have caring and supportive relationships with some staff. The home is reliant on staff from other homes and agency workers to cover shifts. This means that some staff have not invested in the home or spent enough time there to enable them to build positive relationships with children and young people. Furthermore, a lack of care of the children and young people is demonstrated by poor decision making and ineffective action. For example, care staff did not support a young person who, under the influence of alcohol, had been taken to hospital by the police and been admitted, until early afternoon the following day. Additionally, staff have gone to bed while children and young people remain up and unsettled. This not only demonstrates poor relationships with children and young people, but also a lack of ability to manage their behaviour appropriately and a disregard for their safety.</p> <p>Children and young people are generally healthy. However, one young person has not accessed the dentist for a year. Although the young person had refused on a number of occasions to attend her appointments, poor planning meant that other appointments were also missed. Furthermore, a social worker confirmed that a young person who did not consume alcohol prior to moving to this home has been intoxicated on a number of occasions, including an incident when medical treatment was required.</p> <p>Children and young people who are not currently attending a school do not consistently make constructive use of their time. On occasions, they will complete educational work and go out on educational trips, but this appears to be dependent on which staff are on duty. Staff say that they take children and young people to local places of interest and try to make education fun. However, this was not evident during the inspection. Education providers say that children are making some progress, but this is slow, due to their previous poor educational attendance and outcomes.</p> <p>Children and young people are not regularly engaged in activities with staff. For example, records reflect that one child had not participated in an activity with staff for 23 days. This means that children and young people do not have the opportunity to build positive relationships with staff, and lack opportunities to increase their confidence, resilience and self-esteem. Although children and young people are asked to plan menus and complete their activity planner on a weekly basis, there is a lack of meaningful consultation about their care or the day-to-day running of the home.</p>	



Some young people have moved on successfully, having made positive progress while residing at this home. Children and young people are encouraged to carry out household tasks such as cooking, cleaning and shopping. This helps them to transition into independent living. When placements have been successful, young people have made particular progress with their education and behaviour as well as rebuilding relationships with their family. This has meant that these young people have been able to return home to their family.

Children and young people live in a clean and well-maintained home that offers individual bedrooms and comfortable communal space.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<p>Children and young people are not effectively protected from harm. Risk minimisation strategies are not rigorous enough to protect the particularly vulnerable children and young people. Some staff do not have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and they do not take effective action when there are serious concerns. Staff have not followed correct procedures when young people have gone missing. This means that there have been unnecessary delays in reporting them missing to the police. Staff have not been diligent when responding to young people who run away. For example, when a vulnerable young person boarded a train, staff did not follow her. There have been also been unnecessary delays in picking up young people who have been found and held by police in other counties.</p> <p>Children and young people do not feel safe and secure at this home. They do not have confidence in the ability of staff to keep them safe. This is demonstrated through their behaviour. For example, a child barricaded themselves into their bedroom for a day. Children and young people often run away from the home. High levels of violence contribute to the often hostile home environment. There have been incidents in which young people have seriously assaulted staff and gone on to assault the police who were called to support. A social worker stated that she believes that staff are fearful of the children and young people. The police are also concerned that staff do not have the ability to manage safely the scale of behaviour presented by the current group of young people.</p> <p>Behaviour is managed poorly. Staff have failed to set consistent boundaries. Because sanctions and consequences are not used effectively, children and young people are not supported to take responsibility for their actions. Staff responses to harmful and potentially dangerous behaviour are also poor. For example, a young person's pocket money was given to them to spend freely the day after she had returned to the home intoxicated. The child's social worker agreed that this was poor practice which put the young person at risk of further harm. Although some</p>	

core staff clearly have positive and effective relationships with children and young people, the prolific use of staff from other homes and agency staff has meant that children and young people do not have consistent care. Consequently, they are not able to build positive and trusting relationships with those staff.

Children who are aged under 15 have unrestricted access to a large number of DVDs that are only suitable for those aged 15 and over. Some of these films contain significant levels of violence. Staff have not considered the potential impact of such films on children and young people who struggle to regulate their behaviour.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<p>The registered manager is qualified and experienced. However, she has not had a stable staff team, which means that she has had a significant workload. When she has gone on leave, staff have become ineffective.</p> <p>Poor planning has contributed to weak outcomes for children and young people. Young people have been admitted to the home without consultation with the relevant social worker. In addition, managers have not ensured that there will be sufficient staff, with the necessary skills and experience, to meet the range of needs presented by young people. This has given rise to a reliance on agency staff and staff who work in other homes.</p> <p>The registered manager is not aware of some serious incidents that have occurred in the home. This means that she is unable to monitor the home properly to ensure consistent, high-quality care. Information sharing is poor, because some incidents are recorded with very little detail. For example, it is recorded within the staff communication book that a young person was given money which she bought alcohol with, but no further information is recorded. The registered manager is therefore unable to establish the important detail of this incident. This poor record-keeping practice also means that the registered manager is not able to track patterns and trends of behaviour effectively, which will further hinder positive outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>The registered manager does not have an effective working relationship with partner agencies. For example, the police do not hold risk assessments for all the children and young people who are resident. There is a lack of communication with all relevant youth offending teams, and social workers receive information that is not detailed or accurate about serious incidents. Furthermore, a social worker complained that she was not properly consulted when an internal transfer went ahead for one of her young people.</p>	

The staff rota does not accurately reflect the staff on duty. This makes it difficult for the registered manager to monitor the use of agency staff and staff from other homes.

## 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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