

1249184

Registered provider: Horizon Care And Education Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is part of a private company that provides children's homes and schools.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection. None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Frequent staff changes and regular use of agency staff have resulted in inconsistency, and a failure to build trusted relationships with young people

Staff have not demonstrated sufficient skills in therapeutic, empathic care practice to help young people.

- Staff and managers do not know enough about young people's needs and relevant plans, even when young people move in from other homes in the organisation. This holds staff back from providing effective individualised care.
- Staff do not consistently provide suitable, well-planned, low-stress routines that meet young people's needs.
- Staff do not use care records to help young people engage, learn or make progress. As a result, young people are suspicious about what is being written about them.
- Staff do not keep, or encourage young people to make or keep, memories of good experiences or of significant events.
- Leaders and managers in the organisation have not ensured that the home environment is welcoming, well maintained, clean and fully equipped, indoors and out, before admitting young people. This holds back young people's participation and sense of belonging.
- Young people and staff did not experience consistent, effective management for the first three months of the home's operation. Improvements implemented by the new manager have not yet translated into improving outcomes for young people.

The children's home's strengths:

- The new manager has now built up a sufficiently qualified staff team.
- One young person has experienced a well-planned move to the home.
- Both young people who presently live here want to stay, and they like the staff.
- The new manager has worked swiftly over recent weeks to address many areas of weakness in staff practice, routines, and recording.
- The new manager has identified, and is pressing the organisation for, necessary improvements to the home environment.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection since registration.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(d) and (e))	20/07/2017
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust, an understanding about acceptable behaviour and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(ix)) In particular, ensure that staff continuously improve their self-awareness and skills in therapeutic care practice so that they help young people to best effect.	20/07/2017
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)) In particular, when young people move from within the organisation, ensure that all their plans are transferred and utilised from the outset, so that young people's health and safety are not compromised.	20/07/2017
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children and use	20/07/2017

<p>this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, provide safe, welcoming outdoor spaces; suitable communal sitting arrangements in the kitchen; and ensure that all areas where the pet cat goes are kept clean and hygienic.</p>	
<p>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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, provide safe, suitable, well planned, low stress routines, outside of the staff office, that include sufficient drivers and cars, and comfortable spaces for activities with wi-fi connectivity.</p>	20/07/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. They should be regularly reminded of their rights to see information kept about them and be given information about how they might be supported to access their records in later life. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Ensure that staff keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of their time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Three young people have lived here since the home opened in January 2017. The first

young person was admitted before there were sufficient staff to provide consistent care for him. He experienced frequent staff changes when agency staff and staff from other homes covered. At one stage, there was only one core member of staff. This young person did not receive good care and support, and did not make progress educationally, emotionally, socially, or psychologically. At the time of inspection, two young people continue to be cared for by different agency members of staff and by new staff who are being added to the team. For example, young people only knew one of the three members of staff who were caring for them on the first day of this inspection. Many of the relationships that young people enjoy with staff are, therefore, still shallow. Young people are still not settled enough to make good progress.

Young people's day-to-day experiences are not well organised. Young people do not have good regular routines for getting to their education, eating regular meals and getting a good night's sleep. Staff do not develop and execute daily plans successfully, and they have not found ways to make an effective difference when addressing each individual young person's emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Staff have practical difficulties in delivering good routines. For example, there are not always enough available vehicles. Staff also have skills-related difficulties. They do not demonstrate sufficient skills in therapeutic, empathic care practice to best help young people. Nevertheless, staff listen to young people's views and ensure that their rights are met. For example, staff help young people take proper care of their pet cat. Staff also make sure that young people are able to enjoy quality time with their family and friends.

Staff and managers do not know enough about young people's needs and relevant plans, even when young people move here from homes within the organisation. Staff and managers' transition planning has improved. For example, one young person received direct input from staff and the manager before moving in. This reassured him, and meant that he wanted to move here. However, young people still move into the home without important risk assessments, and without behaviour, health and therapeutic action plans from their previous placement. This means that staff are not able to continue with safe, helpful strategies and routines that young people are already used to.

Young people like the staff and the manager. They say that they want to stay here. A social worker said, 'Staff do not give up on [young person].' However, young people are wary and suspicious about what is being written about them. They do not read, amend or keep any of their records, and are not collecting any memorabilia about happy times and enjoyable events that they experience. Young people refuse copies of their 'looked after child' (LAC) review reports. Staff do not know when young people's preventive health injections are due for renewal. Staff are missing numerous opportunities to provide better individualised care through creative and child-friendly recording. This means that young people do not get the considerable help that they require in order to catch up, overcome their difficulties, mature and prepare for an independent future.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Young people have been admitted to the home without sufficient information about their risky behaviour. The first young person who was admitted required two staff at all times. The staff team was not large enough to meet this requirement. Agency and staff from other homes were needed every day, but many refused to provide cover because they were intimidated by the violent and threatening behaviour shown by this young person. Staff were unable to form effective relationships or prevent many incidents of serious damage, harm and going missing. Incidents escalated in frequency and severity until the placement was ended.

The current, newly formed staff team members are warm, vigilant and attentive to young people, but they have not identified, understood or been able to manage young people's risky behaviour. They are not briefed about serious incidents that have occurred in previous homes that young people have come from. They do not use routines and strategies that minimise the likelihood of serious reoccurrences. For example, young people are in the office with staff, using computers and playing games. This is despite serious unsafe incidents that have occurred in previous homes, during which these young people have accessed keys, money, records, medicines and substances that, if misused, are hazardous to health.

Staff are not consistently providing clear, well-planned, low-stress routines that meet young people's needs, even when these have been advised to staff in young people's therapeutic action plans. Staff are not consistently managing the impact of a new admission on the existing young person. Even though staff give some help to young people, to calm them and settle them to sleep each night, young people still do not feel secure enough to settle routinely or consistently focus on positive activities. As a result, damage and risky, harmful behaviour continue to occur occasionally, sometimes necessitating police assistance.

Staff and the manager use safeguarding arrangements that meet statutory requirements. For example, they consider carefully the arrangements that are made about contact with friends and family. Staff help young people to balance independence and freedom, but staff also exercise their responsibility to minimise influences on young people that are unsafe, exploitative or radicalising. Staff share information with social workers, youth offending staff, and police in an effort to ensure that young people receive coordinated help and advice.

Staff focus on rewarding engagement and positive behaviour. For example, they rewarded a young person with football goals when he did not cause any damage around the home for a number of days. Staff also ensure that young people can always access the sports, activities and clubs that they belong to or enjoy, regardless of recent behaviour. If a young person's behaviour has been negative or unsafe, staff talk to them about it and together they look for ways of making up for what the young person has done. One young person said that being here is 'good'. He also said that he feels safe. Nevertheless, some staff lack good skills in demonstrating empathy, and analysing and interpreting behaviour in the light of each young person's past experiences and needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers in the organisation admitted young people to the home before a staff team was ready, and before the environment was welcoming and equipped. The registered manager was not able to coordinate, manage or maintain a good standard of care for young people, and she resigned from the position after a few months. The new manager demonstrates good quality interactions with staff and young people. He is making improvements, but these have not yet had much impact on young people's progress and outcomes.

The outdoor areas are overgrown with weeds, long grass and debris, with many areas in the grounds fenced off. Indoors, there is nowhere to sit in the large kitchen apart from the window ledge or worktops. Young people and the cat frequently sit on the worktops, but routines for keeping the tops clean for food preparation are not robust enough. Staff and young people wander between the kitchen, the corridor and the office. The atmosphere feels transient and unsettled. Young people deface walls and window ledges. The environment appears to hold back young people's participation, sense of belonging and progress. The new manager has repeatedly requested investment and manpower to help address these problems, but neither has been forthcoming to date.

The new manager is going through Ofsted's registration process at the time of this inspection. He has now built up a sufficiently qualified staff team. He has worked swiftly over recent weeks to address many areas of weakness in staff practice, routines, and recording. For example, he has created clear 'missing from home action plans' for staff to use if either of the two young people who now live here go missing. He has also created simple cue sheets to help staff better understand each young person and help them with their emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, his staff are not trained in the model of therapeutic care practice that the organisation uses. Staff require training and skills development in this area in order to make a significant impact on young people.

The new manager has a clear understanding of the home's weaknesses and strengths. He identified that admissions must be planned better, and that staff need to be consistent, well-briefed and aware of young people's needs and history. He planned for the second young person's placement well. He was able to refuse further admissions that were not good matches with this young person.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look

after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1249184

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care And Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Venture House, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park,
Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Graeme Cheyne

Registered manager: Allan Shaw

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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