

# 1241975

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 four 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:** 4 to 5 October 2017

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**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 is good because:

- Young people feel well cared for by a committed staff team.
- Young people's emotional and psychological health improves.
- Young people have a good relationship with the manager.
- Staff and the manager consistently provide young people with nurture, empathy

and understanding.

- The home's clinician gives staff and the manager good advice. This enables them to respond therapeutically to young people's emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Young people feel safe and their risky behaviour is reducing because they trust staff to listen to them and help them.
- Staff support young people with homework.
- The manager and staff work well with social workers.
- The manager makes herself available to young people and to staff and demonstrates considerable care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people of school age are not attending school.
- One young person's complaint has not been investigated in a timely way.
- Young people are not always offered a return home interview from an independent person after they have been missing from care.
- Managers do not use all their review, supervision and recruitment systems effectively.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 10 March 2017   | Registration    | Not applicable       |

## 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, the 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>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1) and (2)(viii))</p>   | 30/11/2017 |
| <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. (Regulation 39(3))</p>  | 30/11/2017 |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(g)(ii))</p> | 30/11/2017 |

### Recommendations

- Ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

- Ensure that the home's procedures take into account the views of appropriate local services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing person incidents in the area where the home is located. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)

In particular, the home should establish links with the relevant service for conducting return interviews in the area where the home is located. The home should establish, in advance of needing it, what 'return from missing' visiting service can be offered to young people who are placed in the home from other local authorities.
- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that, as set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person maintains good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ascertain from references that staff are suitable and safe to work with children by recording and evaluating necessary information and evidence from referees.
- Ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions is kept and that both the person giving the supervision and the staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

In particular, ensure that the registered manager has a copy of her supervision records from her line manager.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the home was opened in March 2017, four young people have been admitted. Two of the young people have been discharged. The two young people currently living here have good relationships with the staff and the manager. One young person told the inspector, 'Since being here I've been through tough times and staff have been there for me no matter what. The manager is amazing – she never gives up. I'm so thankful to the staff and the manager – they have helped me so much.'

Young people's emotional and psychological health improves. This enables them to begin to see that there is a positive future ahead of them. Staff and the manager consistently provide young people with nurture, empathy and understanding. The staff advocate for young people with the whole team of professionals around them. This means that young people's difficulties associated with being in the care system are minimised and

overcome. One young person's social worker said, 'They are in constant communication. They are experienced in what they do and are committed to my resident and create a safe and homely environment.' However, young people are not currently attending school, despite the manager's engagement with placing authorities to try to find the right school. Staff do not focus enough on helping young people to develop a healthier lifestyle. This creates a missed opportunity for staff to offer advice, support and guidance on health and well-being.

The manager and staff visit young people before they move in and find out about their likes, dislikes, fears and concerns. One young person said, 'All I wanted to do was see my little brother. I felt the anger build up inside of me. I didn't understand why I was moving. I was scared.' The manager negotiated for the young person to stay at home for an extra night so that she could see her brother and have a chance to say all her goodbyes. The manager ensured that staff came to collect her rather than use secure transport. Staff bought the particular chocolate bars for her that she likes. They prepared all the bedrooms and let her choose her bedroom. Staff put the kettle on, made drinks and spent time helping her unpack. Recently, the young person said, 'I love everything about [name of home]. I am surprised how far I have come.' Another young person's social worker said, 'I would like to thank the manager for her time and commitment to making the move work.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Staff work tirelessly and use the advice of therapists about how best to meet young people's needs. Staff accept young people's difficulties and empathise with the struggles that they are experiencing. Staff make themselves available to listen, discuss and nurture. They seek with young people practical solutions and simple strategies to help reduce young people's unsafe behaviour. For example, one young person is going to try a punch bag to help work out her anger. Another young person is doing fine arts and crafts to soothe and reduce the urge to self-harm. This therapeutic approach is working and young people are gaining control over their emotions. As a result, young people are no longer going missing or self-harming.

Young people trust staff to help them resolve their difficulties. For example, one young person went missing from care because she wanted to see her family. Staff and the manager negotiated with the young person's social worker to resolve the difficulty quickly and safely. Now she visits family regularly and independently, without behaving unsafely. She said to the manager, 'Thanks so much for speaking up for me.' Similarly, the manager and staff have quickly identified when young people are exposed to risks of exploitation and crime when missing from care. Staff manage situations quickly by working with police, social workers, child and adolescent mental health services, youth offending workers and neighbours. However, young people have not always had the opportunity to talk to someone independent when they returned from being missing.

Managers take up references about all staff who work in the home and these are verified by telephone. However, when a reference only gives the staff member's dates of employment, there is no additional check made to ensure that the staff member has not

been the subject of any safeguarding allegations or disciplinary processes in their previous jobs. This creates a potential for unsuitable people being recruited to work with young people.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home's present manager started in April 2017. The new manager has quickly made a very positive impact on staff and young people. For example, she promptly and effectively contributed to changing one young person's care plan. She ended this young person's placement because she was spending all her time living safely in her family home. The manager demonstrates excellent care practice and leads staff by her example. One young person wrote, 'I can't thank you enough for what you've done for me – I love you like chocolate.' Another young person told a young person who was new in the home, 'There are not many managers like [name], so you need to listen to her.'

The manager is well organised and values the staff team. She makes sure that staff receive good support, supervision, training and advice. This means that they are confident about how to meet young people's individual needs. For example, the manager reflects with staff individually about the stresses and challenges of the work that they are doing. She shares the therapist's advice.

The manager works well with other agencies and takes responsibility for getting things done. For example, she works well with social workers and relatives to make sure that young people are not cut off from their families, even when they live a long way from home. One social worker said, 'The manager is very approachable and hands-on; she communicates regularly with me.' The manager has made contact with education providers and virtual school heads in an attempt to resolve problems when young people do not have a school placement.

The manager has not kept a clear record of all the action taken about a complaint that a young person made. She has not identified that over three months have gone by and there is no completed investigation or outcome to the matter. In addition, the manager does not have written notes of some of her own supervision sessions. This means that she has nothing to remind her of any actions that she has agreed to take.

## **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:** 1241975

**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:** Thomas Haire

**Registered manager:** Danielle Billingham

## Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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