

1256795

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 home is a privately operated children's home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 November 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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: this is the home's first inspection

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:

- The young people living at the home experience individualised care tailored to their complex needs from an experienced and stable staff team.
- The introduction of new young people to the home is undertaken sensitively and through robust referral processes, underpinned by the completion of comprehensive impact risk assessments.
- The home's environment is warm, homely and nurturing, replicating a family atmosphere that young people have really responded to. The young people have access to a range of educational and social activities both in the home and in the local community.
- Young people have risk assessments that evolve throughout their time in placement. These are living documents that clearly identify risks and reinforce safe practice; the young people are clearly protected from harm and their well-being is of paramount importance.
- Contact with friends and family is promoted; staff develop and foster meaningful relationships with parents, resulting in improved family contact for the young people.
- The registered manager has created a culture that promotes innovative practice through the development of a skilled and experienced staff team that improves the lives of the young people in its care.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people have the opportunity to develop trusting and nurturing relationships with staff who are both competent and committed in delivering quality care. The young people's complex needs and vulnerabilities are clearly understood, and staffing ratios ensure that their safety and well-being are being promoted. The young people have a voice in all aspects of their care, as staff listen to them and respect their views and opinions. This has seen young people experiencing a sense of belonging and making positive progress very early on in their placement. As one child commented about her key worker: 'What you do for children is excellent and I am sure many people look up to you; I do anyway. You never give up and you're just yourself.'

All the young people are engaging in some form of formal education that is tailored to their specific needs. For some young people, their attendance and commitment to learning can fluctuate. Effective liaison with schools and the virtual school service has ensured that young people have equal access to the range of educational opportunities

and support. On admission to the home, one young person had experienced numerous school placements with significant disruption to her learning. With calm encouragement and extensive support, the young person is now attending the organisation's in-house provision on a daily basis and is showing genuine aptitude in her academic abilities.

Alongside formal education, young people have access to a range of extra-curricular opportunities that combine recreational and educational activities. Staff ensure that young people's time is structured around positive experiences based on their individual interests. One young person has enjoyed visiting museums and regularly volunteers at an animal sanctuary after school. Equally, the young people enjoy group activities and outings and recently went to a local fairground together. All the young people enjoy cooking meals and baking cakes and with the support of the staff team have planned a 'come dine with me' event. The commitment to improving young people's care experiences in an environment that is both nurturing and cheerful has gone a long way in stabilising young people.

Promoting and maintaining family relationships is a key strength, with staff going out of their way to ensure that contact is supported safely and is meaningful to the young person. Staff facilitate regular communication with parents and other key individuals. This helps to develop and nurture family relationships, which is an acknowledgement that bridging this gap will improve future outcomes for the young people in their care.

Staff regularly undertake key-work sessions that focus on the young person's life experiences and their impact on current behaviours and lifestyle choices. Clinical advice and support for staff have been beneficial in managing the emotional well-being of the young people. For one young person, this has seen a significant reduction in self-harm and dangerous behaviours. The social worker commented: 'The complexities of [Name's] behaviours are clearly managed well and the relationships that have been developed are having a positive impact on her. [Name] continues to push boundaries but the approach used by the manager and staff in terms of positive reinforcement has really helped in settling her in.'

The manager and staff create opportunities for children to contribute to the day-to-day running of the home. Weekly residents' meetings cover a range of topics and encourage participation in menu planning, group and individual activities and redecoration. The manager consults with the young people on a daily basis, and his hands-on approach ensures that any suggestions, moans or groans are being addressed and that the staff are placing the well-being of the young people at the centre of their practice. As one young person said: 'We all had to put a good proposal as to why a PlayStation was better than an Xbox, and it was convincing, so the manager got us one.'

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

The young people's risk-taking behaviours are clearly understood, with systems and procedures in place to ensure that young people are safeguarded and protected from harm. The manager and staff are unquestionably committed to implementing strategies that see risk-taking and dangerous behaviours minimised. Young people who go missing

experience a well-coordinated response and staff more than fulfil the statutory guidance. As testament to staff vigilance and harm reduction strategies, a professional said: 'I am impressed with how vigilant staff have been when [Name] has gone missing. Staff have always had sight of her and there have only been two brief periods when [Name] has eluded staff. Staff go "above and beyond" in safeguarding [Name].'

Young people feel safe and protected. Young people's complex behaviours are clearly assessed and understood at the point of admission to the home, and early predictors to such behaviours are monitored and acted upon to prevent escalation. The home has recently admitted two young people in an emergency and under difficult circumstances. Despite the unplanned nature of the admissions, the manager ensured that impact risk assessments were completed and the needs and feelings of other children living at the home were considered. In reflection with the manager, he said: 'We have been preparing [Name] for over two weeks for the possibility of having more young people living at the home. Taking new admissions would always have been hard for [Name] so I ensured there were 1-to-1 staffing and waking night staff in place for the foreseeable future.'

Practice within the home is of a high standard and staff manage incidents appropriately; their understanding and responses to behaviours associated with harm to self and others have seen a significant change in one young person. The use of restraint has reduced because of staff finding alternative ways to de-escalate situations specific to the needs of each young person. For one young person, restorative practice has increased her sense of personal responsibility. The young person's impromptu actions in clearing up damage caused following an incident are testament to the effective strategies in place.

Risk assessments are regularly updated to mirror current behaviours and manage risks, both within the home environment and in the community. Young people respond well to the boundaries imposed because they understand the rationale behind them. One young person has accepted that having access to a mobile phone and the internet increases her risk-taking behaviour. The manager said: '[Name] is seeing positive use of technology from two other young people; we have covered internet safety in our residents' meetings.' Staff have the opportunity to undergo specialised training, to better respond to issues that underlie certain behaviours, in such areas as child sexual exploitation and self-harm, including ligature training.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager provides outstanding leadership. He is child-centred, putting the needs of the children and young people first at all times. He has passion, enthusiasm and commitment. He is suitably qualified, having had a wealth of previous management experience. He has a clear, strong vision of how he sees the home developing. He is actively involved in the day-to-day running of the home. He is open and available for all of the staff and young people. Staff spoke of him being a 'hands-on manager, supportive and very child-focused'. He has high aspirations for young people and the staff, and has created a culture within the home that improves the lives and outcomes of the young people.

As a manager he is reflective and has a wealth of experience of forming new staff teams in children's homes. He draws on these strengths in establishing a skilled, motivated and child-focused staff team. The registered manager is ensuring that the home is operating in line with the current statement of purpose. He has developed an effective quality assurance system and has a schedule for regular reviews and audits that improve the quality of care for young people. The manager has a very good understanding of, and readiness to use and develop, research-based practice in the home.

The manager and senior staff team have a clear understanding of the progress that the young people are making at the home. They have a thorough knowledge of all the plans for young people. When two young people came to live at the home on an emergency basis, the manager and one of the seniors visited the young people prior to their admission; this helped them to feel welcomed and valued in their new home. Prior to the young people's admission, their current and historic files were obtained so that staff could fully familiarise themselves with the young people's plans. This ensured that the transition for the young people was a positive experience and caused the least disruption possible.

Staff supervision is tailored to meet the needs of each individual staff member. There is a well-documented programme of induction, which was evidenced in the 'On-boarding journal' that is completed with all new staff. Staff confirmed that they were very well supported by the registered manager, and they receive regular formal and informal supervision. Staff have access to and have completed all mandatory training and the manager has sourced specialised training in areas such as EpiPen and associated anaphylactic shock awareness, and ligature training following the admission of one young person. The manager is focusing on building a strong, skilled and experienced staff team. He is aware that developing and supporting the staff to grow and develop in a professional manner, has a direct correlation on young people achieving good outcomes and receiving quality care.

The manager has developed highly effective consultation, communication and joint working practices with professionals and partner agencies. A professional from the missing from care pilot team enthused: 'The team has a very good relationship with the manager and staff at the home and communication is very good; information sharing is open and transparent.' Another area that has been developed is a file-auditing system that is jointly undertaken between the staff at the home and young people's social workers, which ensures that there is close collaboration between young people's key workers and social workers. This practice helps to develop a mutual understanding of the plans for young people and how each professional has a role to play in ensuring positive outcomes.

The manager and senior members of staff are well able to challenge other professionals in an appropriate and professional manner; they are good advocates for the young people. For one young person, the manager was instrumental in challenging an educational provider, and this resulted in a positive outcome. As a result, a plan was put in place for the young person's speedy return to school.

Equality and diversity are threads that run through the training at the home from the point of induction. The registered manager described it as a 'lived experience'. For example, there is a map of the world in the kitchen and when the staff and young people make food from another country they are able to find the country on the map. One young person has Italian and Swedish heritage and the staff have helped and supported her to bake a Swedish Christmas cake. A staff member said: 'Our primary role is to make this a home for the young people that live here and keep them safe.'

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: 1256795

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: Barry Eannetta

Registered manager: Ben Attfield

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

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