

1185765

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 owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people aged between eight and 17 years old on admission, who have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has obtained his level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has worked for the organisation since July 2010. He has over 16 years' residential experience.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2019

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: 7 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2017	Full	Good
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/05/2016	Full	Good

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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(xii))</p>	31/04/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that when a young person is admitted to the home, impact assessments include clear reasoning why matching decisions are made and provide analysis of how risks could impact on each young person in the home and can be reduced.</p>	31/04/2019
<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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	31/04/2019

(Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(c)(h))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	31/04/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular, provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(b)(2)(d))	31/04/2019
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes all necessary information; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i-viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, ensure that the registered person or authorised person speaking to the child did not take part in the restraint.	31/04/2019
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))	31/04/2019
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 (1)(3)) In particular, ensure that outcome letters to young people contain accurate information.	31/04/2019
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (c))	31/04/2019

Recommendation

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services to meet a child's needs during their time in the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality care standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

In particular, escalate concerns regarding delays in one young person being able to access education.

Inspection judgements

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

Managers do not always ensure that new young people are well matched with those already living at the home. New young people's challenging behaviours have, at times, adversely affected young people already resident. As a result, some young people do not experience placement stability and they move on sooner than anticipated.

Young people told the inspector that they do not always know that other young people are moving on and why, and this can be unsettling for them. However, some young people do benefit from well-planned and coordinated care and experience positive moves on from the home.

Young people's educational progress is variable. For some, this is good and young people engage readily in their learning. For example, one young person is enjoying work experience. However, one young person does not attend school currently, and plans for him to return to school have been delayed. Although the registered manager has recently expressed his concerns with the placing authority, he has not done this promptly. The young person is engaging with a home tutor. However, not having a clear plan for his return to school is affecting his learning and experiences.

Staff support young people to attend routine health appointments. Some aspects of young people's health improve significantly. For example, one young person arrived at the home with an addiction to cannabis. Staff supported the young person to access drug services and he is now drug free. This is an excellent achievement. Another young person has now received much-needed dental work. However, the inspector identified inconsistencies in staff practice. For example, staff do not always carry out work with young people on sexual health as outlined in their plans and, on one occasion, staff did not promptly seek medical advice when needed.

Young people have access to a range of activities, for example fishing, football, bowling and trampolining. This means that the young people's interests and hobbies are promoted, and this enables young people to learn new skills while having fun.

Young people develop some positive relationships with staff. A social worker commented

on the particularly supportive relationship a young person has with his key worker.

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

Staff use effective behaviour management strategies to de-escalate potentially challenging situations. Occasionally, physical intervention is required to keep young people safe. Young people and staff do not always have the opportunity to have a debrief with someone who was not involved with the restraint. This means that young people do not speak to someone independent to explore their feelings about what happened. In addition, staff are not always provided with the opportunity to reflect on their actions following a restraint, by way of a debrief.

Some young people have experienced bullying at the home by their peers. This has affected their experience of living at the home and has the potential to compromise their welfare. Although staff have discussed bullying with young people, to make it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable, they have not always undertaken more meaningful follow-up work with them. This means that young people are not being provided with the opportunity to explore what bullying means and how their behaviours can impact on others.

When young people have made allegations, the registered manager has carried out investigations. However, all the actions taken, and outcomes, are not always clearly recorded. The lack of a clear audit trail does not help the manager and other relevant people to identify patterns, effectively monitor the service and establish whether any lessons learned have been implemented.

When an allegation was made against staff, this was not reported to Ofsted in line with regulation. Not notifying Ofsted leaves the regulator without essential information with which to monitor the effectiveness of the home.

Young people do not go missing from home often. When they do, staff respond appropriately. They liaise with relevant agencies and ensure that young people have the opportunity to talk to an independent person on their return to the home.

Staff carry out some good work with young people to help them to manage their emotions. This helps young people to develop different coping strategies.

Young people said that they feel safe. They told the inspector that they feel listened to and can identify a trusted member of staff they can speak to.

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

Although some changes have been made to impact risk assessments, these do not go far enough. These documents lack sufficient detail and do not clearly explain why matching decisions are made. Given that some young people have left sooner than anticipated, this concern remains.

Young people's case files do not contain all relevant documentation. For example, personal education plans, care plans and statutory health assessments are not available for all young people. This has the potential to limit the manager's monitoring of young people's progress in line with relevant plans.

Although staff generally work well with partner agencies, one social worker has raised concerns about the level of staff input to support a young person's transition to high school and staff failing to attend a personal education plan meeting. This indicates that not all young people receive well-coordinated and consistently good care.

When young people make complaints, managers look into their concerns. However, they do not give young people accurate information about how their complaint has been dealt with. For example, the outcome letters state that Ofsted has investigated the young person's complaint. This is not true and is misleading.

Not all staff have an appraisal. This means that staff do not have a formal review of their practice and development at least once a year.

When new members of staff have joined the team, they have received a good induction. This helps them to understand their role and develop the basic skills they need to care for young people. Some staff do not complete all their mandatory training within agreed timescales. This highlights deficiencies in management monitoring and means that some staff do not keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

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: 1185765

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: Tina Morten

Registered manager: Peter Guest

Inspector

Sarah Junor-Fitzpatrick, social care inspector

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