

1241975

Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large private provider. It is registered to provide help and support for four children who struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour. There are currently four children living in the home.

There is a registered manager in post.

Inspection date: 8 March 2021

This monitoring visit

This monitoring inspection was conducted in response to a number of concerning issues relating to safeguarding of children and staff's ability to manage and respond to children's escalating challenging behaviours.

Inspectors have considered the impact of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, which resulted in two periods of self-isolation for children living in the home.

Staff do not take full account of children's vulnerabilities, resulting in incidents being able to escalate and children being placed at risk of harm. The registered manager and staff do not have the skills to manage children's presenting needs safely and effectively. There have been a number of recurring incidents when children have assaulted other children and staff. This included an assault on a child who has a brain injury and a member of staff who suffered a concussion. Partner agencies shared with inspectors' significant concerns about the escalation of incidents and how staff manage children's behaviour. Failure to recognise and respond effectively to such incidents has placed children at risk of harm.

Children are frequently restrained as a way of managing their behaviours. During one incident, a child was restrained six times. The registered manager's review and oversight of physical interventions is poor and does not include sufficiently robust scrutiny to ensure that the use of restraint is necessary and proportionate.

Furthermore, the manager is unable to identify and address shortfalls in staff practice, resulting in staff continuing to use physical intervention as a way of dealing with children's behaviours. This compromises the safety and well-being of children.

The registered manager has failed to ensure that when children make allegations against members of staff these are promptly referred to the local authority designated officer. Inspectors raised this concern with senior leaders, who then discovered a further four incidents that they had not been aware of. In these cases children have made allegations that have not been appropriately dealt with by following agreed safeguarding procedures. Further to this, there is not a clear system of keeping records in relation to allegations. This failure to follow basic safeguarding procedures leaves children and staff vulnerable.

One child informed staff that he had been sexually assaulted by a peer in the home. The staff and the registered manager have failed to follow child protection procedures. Senior leaders were not aware of this serious allegation until they were informed by inspectors, who had discovered the allegation when they were reviewing an incident record. This leaves children vulnerable and potentially at risk of harm.

Staff do not adequately monitor children's use of the internet or their personal electronic devices. Managers have not ensured that risk assessments contain all relevant information. Staff do not follow the limited strategies identified in risk assessments and this has led to two children accessing inappropriate sexual content online. This means that children have been placed at risk of harm and are potentially vulnerable to exploitation.

Children have made a number of complaints about how they feel about the home environment and the other children. The registered manager has failed to act on these concerns. This has left children feeling that they are not valued or listened to.

Staff do not address bullying effectively or support children well to manage their relationships. Children have told the independent visitor they are being bullied and made formal complaints about this. After much delay, there has been some work done with children about bullying, but this has not led to things changing for the better in the home. Staff have also failed to de-escalate conflict between children, which has led on at least seven occasions in recent months to children being punched or headbutted in the face.

Staff and the registered manager do not have the experience and skills to manage children's behaviours safely and effectively. For example, incidents relating to a child's harmful sexual behaviours are not understood and only reactive control measures are put in place to try and minimise further incidents. Work undertaken with the child to help him to develop and understand skills to recognise the impact of his behaviours is not consistent and does not always involve any kind of

meaningful reflection with him. This means the child does not develop an understanding of the impact of his behaviours.

The compatibility of children with the other children and staff in the home is not considered on an ongoing basis. When children do not get on, staff cannot manage their behaviour or when there is insufficient staffing for the home this is not reviewed and acted on. This has led to incidents when children and staff have been hurt that may have been avoided.

When plans are delayed or are not progressing, the registered manager has not challenged or escalated this. For example, a child was recommended to have a forensic assessment, due to escalating concerns and a lack of clarity in the network about the child's needs. This has not progressed for over two months. The lack of urgency for progressing support for children means they are not able to receive the support they need.

Training is not provided to staff in key areas relating to children. This includes working with and understanding acquired brain injury, working with sexually harmful behaviour and working with autism spectrum disorder. This leaves staff without up-to-date knowledge in key areas relevant to the children. This means that children are not supported by staff with the required skills and knowledge.

Staff and managers have not ensured that the home environment is clean, homely and tidy. Senior leaders visited the home during the inspection and were shocked to see the neglected and unwelcoming state of the home. The lack of action by staff and managers to address this over several months has meant that children have been living in a chaotic and neglected environment.

Staff do not always receive regular supervisions; this includes new members of staff who are still in their probation period. The records of supervision are not reflective and do not show that staff are receiving practice-related supervision. The supervision records of the managers overseeing the home lack clarity and direction and do not show how senior leaders will ensure managers fulfil their responsibilities in managing the home well.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the home has a sufficient number of skilled and experienced staff to provide care for each child. This has meant that sometimes there are insufficient numbers of staff on duty to safely meet the needs of children in the home. This has contributed to a large number of incidents and children being unsafe in the home.

The registered manager and leaders in the organisation have inadequate oversight of the home. Monitoring and review systems are ineffective and have not promoted improvements to the quality of care children receive. Leaders and managers have also been unaware and have not formally noted when children are unsafe and as a result appropriate and timely action has not been taken. Consequently, children have

been left at risk of harm and staff left unsupported in their efforts to safely and effectively manage children.

Senior leaders have accepted the findings of this monitoring visit and have committed to addressing the shortfalls.

Following the monitoring inspection, 11 requirements and one recommendation have been made. The home's registration was suspended on 10 March 2021.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 22/08/2018 | Full | Good |
| 07/03/2018 | Interim | Declined in effectiveness |
| 04/10/2017 | 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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>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. (Regulation 5(a)(c)(d))</p> | 22 April 2021 |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use 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—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> | 8 April 2021 |

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| <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> | |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) (2)(a)(vi)(vii) (xi)(xii)(xiii))</p> | <p>22 April 2021</p> |
| <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—</p> <p>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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> | <p>8 April 2021</p> |

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| <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> | |
| <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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(h))</p> | 22 April 2021 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> | 22 April 2021 |

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| <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to-</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(ii))</p> | |
| <p>A person may only manage a children's home if—</p> <p>having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children—</p> <p>the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i))</p> | 22 April 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> | 22 April 2021 |
| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect;</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located;</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred;</p> <p>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response;</p> | 8 April 2021 |

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| <p>describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a) (2)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))</p> | 8 April 2021 |
| <p>Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.</p> <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 (1) (3))</p> | 8 April 2021 |

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). This is in relation to the supervision of managers of the home, ensuring that the records of supervision detail a clear action plan and oversight of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1241975

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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Registered manager: Natalie Allen

Inspectors

Shazana Jamal, Social Care Inspector
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