

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 privately owned children's home provides care and support for up to four children who have had adverse early experiences and who have complex needs. There were two children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The current manager has been in post since March 2022 and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 January 2023

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 26 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home's registration was suspended in March 2021 following a monitoring visit which was carried out in response to widespread concerns about the care of children. The registered manager left the company shortly after this. The suspension was lifted by Ofsted in May 2021. At that time, Ofsted put in place a condition that the provider must give Ofsted three months' notice of their intention to admit children, and the provider temporarily closed the home. In March 2022, the provider recruited a new manager. In April 2022, the home was reopened to admit children,

with the provider having complied with the three-month condition. The first child moved into the home in May 2022.

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 |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children talk positively about living in the home and about their relationships with staff. Children also said they can speak with staff about 'anything' and they have access to guidance and support when they need it. These good relationships help them to feel that staff truly care about them.

Staff are committed to promoting children's education. Staff have supported one child with a school move. This has led to a positive settled period in a new school, with the child making good progress with their attendance and engagement in learning. Staff have helped another child to research what they need to meet their aspirations. This has then been clearly communicated to other professionals who work with the child. The manager and staff ensure that the child's voice is kept at the forefront of education planning. This has included obtaining advice from the Children's Commissioner for England and putting in place an advocate. The staff's actions show children that their views are important.

Staff complete meaningful direct-work sessions with children. These are both planned and opportunity-led. This helps children make progress against their overall plans. Staff also help children to see their own progress, so children know that they are achieving their goals and feel proud of themselves.

Staff and managers have not put consistent rules and boundaries in place. For example, the rules around when children can have their mobile phones are not consistent and this is confusing for children. In addition, the expectations about chores and household tasks are not clear and the use of rewards to promote good behaviour is not regularly reviewed to ensure that they are effective. Overall, this hinders children's development and does not appear fair.

Staff and children have invested in the home environment. The provider refurbished the home before it reopened in April 2022 and staff work hard to maintain it to a high standard. This has resulted in a warm, comfortable home for children. Staff and the manager ensure that any maintenance concerns are swiftly addressed so it remains a positive place for children to live.

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

Managers and staff benefit from clear risk assessments relating to concerns about children. These give staff sufficient information and guidance in their work. Staff can also talk with clinicians regularly to develop their practice. Staff know children well and are knowledgeable about their individual risks. This helps them to keep children safe.

Managers take allegations about staff seriously. Staff are clear about what to do if allegations are made and act quickly in children's best interests. Children are clear

who to raise concerns with and how to make a complaint. They receive thoughtful, personalised responses, so they know that staff and managers take their concerns seriously.

Incidents of children going missing have dramatically reduced for children when this was a concern before they moved into the home. Staff have completed work with children to help them make progress in this area. Children are clear that this is also partly because they are happy in the home. While staff usually have a measured approach, there are times when staff responses appear permissive. In addition, there have been times when staff have not searched for children in a timely way when they have not returned home at agreed times. This is not in line with the home's statement of purpose and some incidents of children going missing from the home could have been avoided. This does not take away from the progress children have made.

Children are safe online. Staff carried out a considerable amount of work with one child before giving them a mobile phone. This meant that staff were assured that the child had a good understanding of online safety and how to keep themselves safe. There is a clear monitoring system for children's online activity, when needed, to support ongoing safety. This work has led to children being able to be in better communication with their friends and reduce their social isolation.

Children have relevant health plans. Staff are knowledgeable about children's health. They also understand their responsibilities for children's health. Staff monitor some aspects of children's health sensitively so that children do not feel watched or have a sense of shame. This unobtrusive approach means staff can ensure that children get help if they need it.

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

The manager is aspirational for children. She will challenge others so that children's views are heard and they get the help they need. Staff mirror the manager's aspirations for children. Managers and staff are knowledgeable about children and their progress. The manager reviews and summarises progress regularly. This is an enduring record that helps children to see how well they are doing.

However, there have been concerns raised about managerial actions on two occasions. This has led to disciplinary action. The manager has reflected on this and has identified learning from these issues. As a result, the manager retains the confidence of the provider to lead and manage the home.

Staff are not all clear on their role or the roles of others. Information was not clearly shared during the induction that the manager and staff had. However, this has not been addressed despite several months having passed. Staff feel that too much paperwork is delegated to them and as a result they have less time to spend with children. They also do not feel consistently well led. In addition, the manager has not addressed some difficult relationships in the staff team. Overall, these issues

have affected staff morale. Leaders are aware of this and have booked team-building sessions and workshops in the coming months.

The provider and manager have monitoring systems for the home. While the manager has a good working knowledge of the home and children, their monitoring does not consistently pick up errors in children's records or ensure confidentiality for staff records. There is also a lack of authoritative challenge to staff to develop their practice. This inconsistent attention to detail and challenge negatively impacts on the quality of records and practice.

The manager has reviewed the location of the home. There is a reasonable consideration of the local area but no consultation with other agencies or individuals to draw on their local knowledge. This weakens the review and analysis of local risks.

Staff have regular supervision. There has been a period when newer staff have not received supervision in line with the provider's policy. This means that newer staff have had fewer opportunities to understand their role and develop their knowledge. Staff are up to date with relevant training. The manager has identified some areas for development, such as the quality of staff recording, and has booked workshops to address these key areas.

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 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 staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are consistent in their approach to children who are missing from the home, including searching for them when they are missing.</p> | 15 March 2023 |
| <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 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> | 22 March 2023 |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| <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)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are clear on all staff roles and work is appropriately delegated to them. The registered person should lead accordingly. In addition, the registered person must ensure that essential documents are accurate and of a good standard.</p> | |
| <p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must obtain the views of relevant local services to support their analysis of risk in the local area.</p> | 22 March 2023 |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure there are clear, consistent boundaries in the home for all children. The registered person also should ensure that staff understand these rules and boundaries and support children to understand them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should develop staff's understanding and confidence in their role and work to develop positive morale in the staff team. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.6)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision is provided as stated in the home's policy and workforce development plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that recording in children's documents is of a good quality. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited, Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Prudence Shaw

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector

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