

1245572

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns and manages this home. It provides care for up to four children with social and/or emotional difficulties. Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022.

Inspection date: 3 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 18 April 2023

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Failure to ensure that staff know and understand the children's needs and risks.
- Staff have failed to apply consistent boundaries or act to safeguard children. Leaders have failed to identify or address these shortfalls.
- Failure to identify or fully consider the needs of all children before new children move into the home.
- Failure to ensure that staff are safe to work with children.

Children's day-to-day experiences are poor. They have not received consistent care, and this has led to children becoming unsettled. Staff have not always responded to children in a way that demonstrates they understand how children's experiences and their emotional needs impact on their behaviour. Staff do not provide children with boundaries, and they are inconsistent in their responses to children. This is confusing for children; it does not provide them with a sense of security and prevents them from making progress.

When a child moved into the home in an unplanned way, information about their needs and the impact on the other children was not fully assessed and understood by leaders and managers. The number of incidents involving the children increased significantly, and staff were unable to manage the relationships between the children. This led to the child moving out of the home very quickly after their arrival.

During a period of instability at the home, staff failed to apply consistent boundaries and act effectively to safeguard children. Staff did not supervise a child using a tool that was given to them to repair their wardrobe. This was used to remove window restrictors, which enabled children to climb through a bedroom window.

Information in children's risk assessments is not always well written or clear. One child's risks assessment does not include their known risks and it does not provide clear steps for staff to follow. Another risk assessment is incoherent in describing the procedure to follow when a child may be upset, and access to the bedroom is barricaded.

Some incident records are poorly recorded and do not clarify the detail or the action taken. For example, when a child in the home was assaulted by a peer, it is unclear what happened or whether the child was medically assessed for their injuries. The incident was not reported to the police, and it is not known what steps were taken to support the children to restore their relationship. Information about this incident was not shared with Ofsted.

Children have been restrained in response to some of the incidents. When this happens, the measure used is necessary and proportionate to ensure the safety of children and staff. Children and staff are provided with the opportunity to talk about the incident, but this is not always timely. Not all staff working at the home have the training to intervene and, therefore, have identified that they are unable to support their colleagues effectively.

Children's experience of education varies. The lack of stability at home has had a negative impact on their school attendance. However, staff do encourage children to attend school, and they help children to engage with informal learning at home.

Daily routines and sleep patterns have also been disrupted during this period of instability. Staff have not maintained consistent boundaries, and on occasion, children's access to the internet has meant they have been awake throughout the night.

The management oversight of the home is poor. The systems used to monitor the quality of care and staff performance are not effective. Gaps in restraint records and children's risk assessments have not been identified. When staff have failed to provide children with consistent care and boundaries, the shortfalls have not always been addressed.

The home was not sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of two of the children who lived at this home and have since moved out. Gaps in the rota were often covered by different agency staff, which impacted on the consistency and continuity of care that children received.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that staff are safe to work with children. They have not ensured that the relevant checks have been completed for staff employed through an agency. When information has been shared, they have failed to act on it or implement any safeguards to assure themselves that staff are safe to work with children.

It is unclear if agency staff have the skills and relevant training to meet the needs of children because this information is not known and has not been requested from the agency.

The manager has not always notified Ofsted of serious incidents. When incidents have been notified, this has not been timely. This prevents the regulator from having full information about the risks to children and the steps taken to reduce them.

Two members of core staff have not completed the relevant qualification in line with regulatory timescales. Staff receive supervision, but they are not provided with opportunities for reflection, and staff's training needs have not always been discussed and recorded.

Allegations are taken seriously and have been shared with safeguarding professionals. When children have made a complaint, it has been investigated, and the children have been provided with a response in line with procedures.

Ofsted has issued a notice to restrict children moving into the home and three compliance notices under Regulations 12, 13 and 14 in response to these concerns.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/04/2023	Full	Good
14/06/2022	Full	Good
21/12/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	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, 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 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>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; and</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children's risk assessments are accurate and provide staff with clear guidance to follow;</p> <p>there are systems in place to ensure that staff provide children with consistent boundaries;</p> <p>staff understand how to respond to children being assaulted.</p>	25 February 2024

<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>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and</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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>safer recruitment procedures are followed for all staff employed to work with children, including those employed through an agency;</p> <p>all staff, including agency staff, have the relevant training and skills to meet the needs of the children;</p> <p>the systems in place to review and monitor the quality of care provided to children are effective.</p>	<p>25 February 2024</p>
<p>*The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>	<p>25 February 2024</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i)).</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must take steps to ensure that there is a system in place to fully consider the needs of all children before new children move into the home.</p>	
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ix))</p>	28 March 2024
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p>	28 March 2024

<p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii))</p>	28 March 2024
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>	28 March 2024

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1245572

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park,
Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Oliver Scrimshaw

Registered manager: Sharon Mackenzie

Inspector

Rachel Webster, Social Care Inspector

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