

1229762

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 is a privately run home. Up to three children can live at the home. However, at the time of inspection, one child was resident. Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home.

A manager has been appointed. However, they are not registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 31 July and 1 August 2024

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 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2024	Full	Good
06/07/2022	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
12/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is nicely decorated, and children personalise their bedrooms. Children have mixed emotions about their time spent living at the home. Children feel that certain staff help to keep them safe. Children share that they like the manager and feel that she is positive for the home.

There is a high use of temporary staff, which children can find 'awkward' as they do not know them. This results in a lack of consistency for children. However, some staff have built strong positive relationships with children. This results in children wishing to spend time with them. It also results in children staying in frequent communication with some staff after moving on from the home.

Staff were not positively or appropriately equipped for the admission of one child to the home. This results in staff feeling under prepared to meet the needs of the child or balance these along the needs of the other children. As a result, staff morale is low, and children become aware of this. This negatively impacts on children being welcomed into the home positively.

Feedback from one family member states that staff 'did everything they could' for a child. However, experiences for children have not always been positive. Children do not always feel that staff understand them or have the skills to meet their needs. For example, relating to specific cultural needs, staff have not always been provided with the appropriate training or information required. This resulted in staff being unable to appropriately support one child, ultimately resulting in the child being moved from the home.

Staff do not always understand how a child's needs or lived experiences may impact on their emotional and behavioural responses. This results in staff responding to children's behaviour in a disproportionate way. For example, staff did not inform or prepare an autistic child for work being carried out in their bedroom. When the child expressed frustration by damaging the alterations, staff placed a financial consequence on the child. This shows a continued lack of understanding by staff of children's needs.

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

Staff do not effectively support children's relationships with one another. This results in tensions between children becoming greater. Consequently, children do not feel able to enjoy the ample space of the home. For example, one child felt the need to spend more time in their bedroom to avoid possible tension. Staff being unable to de-escalate conflicts between children led to one child being harmed.

Staff fail to report significant safeguarding concerns to managers in a timely manner. On one occasion, staff did not alert the manager to a child making threats to harm another child until the next day. This resulted in a lack of safety being put in place. On finding out the information, the manager acted appropriately to safeguard children. The manager did not recognise the need for staff learning from this incident to improve future practice or the safeguarding of children.

Staff seek targeted support for children. For one child, this included support for them to reduce self-injurious behaviour. Since the last inspection, and this work concluding, there have been no incidents of self-harm. However, when children express suicidal thoughts prior to school, this information is not always passed on to educational staff.

Staff do not keep clear records of events or decision-making when children leave the home without permission. Staffing ratios and the use of temporary staff result in staff being unable to effectively go and look for children or support them. This is further impaired by poor planning by staff. On one occasion, a temporary staff member was left in the sole care of two children when it was known that one child planned on 'running away'. On another occasion, staff, including management, failed to ascertain how much money a child had managed to take when they left the home. This resulted in staff being unable to assess the levels of potential risk.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the responsible individual and the manager of the home. Throughout this period of change, staff felt unsupported and 'let down'. Although staff's own emotions were discussed in supervision, management failed to provide appropriate or consistent support to the team. In turn, this led to a decline in the quality of staff's written recordings and a deterioration in the quality or consistency of care for children.

At present, the manager does not have consistent oversight of the home. Recording errors or areas for development are not always recognised. This results in missed opportunities for staff learning and development. At times, staff have completed records on behalf of others, resulting in confusion around the recording of these. The manager acknowledges the need for better oversight and plans are being put in place to address this.

Staff feel positive about the appointment of the new manager. She is described as having a 'positive mindset' and being very supportive. Children also feel that the manager is 'a nice person' and that she actively listens to them. The manager and wider management team feel positive about the future and have clear plans in place to improve the quality of care children receive.

The manager has not consulted with relevant persons when compiling the most recent location risk assessment. This results in a further missed opportunity for multi-agency working.

Both requirements set at the last inspection have been reinstated. Shortfalls continue to be found in the oversight of the home and staff's ability to reflect on how children's needs and past experiences may impact on their behaviour or responses to situations.

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;</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;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that staff have the confidence and skill set to appropriately safeguard children. This includes being able to de-escalate situations. It also relates to staff, including the leadership team, being professionally curious</p>	<p>5 September 2024</p>

<p>and ensuring that adequate information is obtained to effectively assess possible risks to children. It also relates to ensuring that safeguarding concerns are appropriately reported to key professionals so that appropriate measures can be put in place.</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 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>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; 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)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that the manager has consistent oversight of records. It also relates to ensuring that learning development from such oversight is appropriately supported to ensure the best outcomes for children. It also relates to ensuring that the manager provides appropriate training so that staff have the required knowledge and skills to</p>	<p>5 September 2024</p>

<p>meet the needs of the children. In particular, this relates to children’s cultural needs.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</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>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>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</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;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix)(x))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that staff understand how children’s current needs and past experiences can impact on behaviour and responses to support. This also relates to ensuring that supervision offers a reflective space for staff to understand and manage how their own feelings may impact on their responses to the behaviour and emotions of children.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	<p>5 September 2024</p>

<p>The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children’s home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that children receive care from people who are known to them. It also relates to ensuring that when people are employed on a temporary basis, that it does not impact on the quality of care provided for children.</p>	<p>5 September 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>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, this relates to ensuring that the registered person adequately prepares staff for the arrival of a new child. This includes ensuring that staff have the knowledge and understanding of the child’s needs so that a positive introduction to the home can take place.</p>	<p>5 September 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the manager ensuring that electronic records are recorded by the appropriate staff member relating to the event.</p>	<p>5 September 2024</p>

The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).

5 September 2024

When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))

In particular, this relates to ensuring that relevant people are consulted regarding the location risk assessment.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that Staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be proportionate and restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 1229762

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Daniel Goldie

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ellen Monk, Social Care Inspector

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