

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020602
Inspector	Hannah Bates
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	New Horizons (Child Care) Limited
Registered person address	The Keys Group, Laganwood House Newforge Lane BELFAST BT9 5NW
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Registered manager	Anne Jessica Clent
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	15/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The home is child focused and committed to outcomes for young people. There is a focus on young people learning independence skills. Regular key working sessions explore issues such as relationships, empathy with others and self-care skills. This helps young people to succeed in later life.

The home has a real strength in supporting young people to advocate for their rights. Young people have a voice and the home supports young people to be heard in respect of their everyday care planning and long term care planning. This empowers young people.

Some young people's risk taking behaviour reduces. Multi-agency working is embedded within the practice of the staff team. Strong communication across agencies underpins the care planning for young people.

Young people engage in education and from their starting points young people make good progress. However, young people are not encouraged to learn outside of their formal educational settings. This means that not all young people receive the same opportunities to learn and reach their full potential.

There is a consistent core staff team in place led by an experienced and supportive Registered Manager. There has been an unsettled period within the home due to poor matching and admissions of young people. This has led to a significant amount of change of young people coming into and leaving the home since the last inspection. This has impacted on the maintenance of the home and the safety and

wellbeing of young people. In turn this has impacted negatively on the morale of the staff team and young people.

This inspection has raised 4 requirements.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people of either gender who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2014	Interim	good progress
14/08/2013	Full	good
05/02/2013	Interim	good progress
03/10/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	the registered person shall ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Reg 4(6))	02/02/2015
11 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to make proper provision for the care, education, supervision, support and, where appropriate, treatment, of children accommodated there (Reg11 (1)(b))	02/02/2015
27 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Reg 27 (4)(a))	02/02/2015

31 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally, and kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Reg 31 (2))	02/02/2015
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Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

There is a strong focus on young people learning independence skills within the home. They learn how to food shop, budget and use public transport dependent on their level of understanding and complexity of needs. Tasks are tailored specifically to the ability of young people and the work is done in collaboration with young people. This promotes young people's confidence and prepares them for when they leave the home. There is a lack of recording and planning in relation to some young people's recent independence learning. This means that for some young people the work is reactive than proactive.

Young people make good educational progress. The home supports young people to attend their educational settings. Young people gain qualifications and skills from school and college. They are encouraged to go on to further education and the home works with educational colleagues to ensure that young people have every opportunity to continue with their education. This promotes their self-esteem and gives them aspirations for their futures. The home advocates strongly for young people to attend education that is most suited to their needs. This gives young people more opportunity to succeed; they feel listened to. For those young people not in full time education, there is a lack of planned educational work for them; this is an area for future development.

Young people learn how to express their views and wishes about their care plans and health needs. They are supported to speak out about what they want. This gives young people autonomy and supports them to deal with a conflict in a positive and constructive way. In turn, this provides young people with positive experiences of methods of being heard, equipping them for later life. They have access to advocates and the home supports young people to make their wishes and feelings heard about their lives. Young people are supported to make transitions to alternative placements. Staff invest heavily in ensuring that young people are involved in their care planning; Young people take responsibility for their emotional health needs by attending appointments and having a voice about medication. Consequentially, young people feel listened to and empowered to have a voice. This promotes their sense of self-esteem.

Young people engage in a range of active activities; this includes pool, football, badminton and bike rides. Young people say they enjoy these activities. Young people develop interests and hobbies which in turn promotes their self-confidence. There is a strong focus on young people enjoying good health. Young people attend smoking cessation clinics and receive support from staff to help them give up smoking. This enables young people to learn about their health needs and how to improve the quality of their health.

Regular key working sessions help young people to learn about issues such as self-care, empathy with others and relationships. This helps young people to start to learn skills for later life. Young people engage in the key working sessions and learn from them. There is a rewards system in place that young people engage in. Young people

have opportunity to reflect on their behaviours, learn from them and make changes. In turn, their resilience is promoted.

Quality of care

adequate

The home is not in a good state of repair due to damage having been caused to it. There is a delay in getting work on the home completed. This means that young people reside in a home which shows signs of unrest and unsettled behaviour. Young people request that the home be repaired and this is echoed by the staff team. Staff feel disempowered in this respect stating that they have limited control over the repairs and maintenance of the home. Consequentially, young people and staff morale is negatively impacted.

The home does not consistently chase up overdue meetings relating to young people's health and educational needs. This means that the aims and objectives of young people's care plans are not consistently met. There is a lack of planned educational activity outside of young people's formal settings. Young people do not reach their full potential with regards to education.

Young people enjoy good health. Staff ensure that young people attend the necessary health appointments and encourage young people to engage with health agencies. Staff work collaboratively with agencies which promote young people's emotional wellbeing. Appointments are made speedily and any concerns about young people's emotional wellbeing are picked up and responded to swiftly. As a result, young people's emotional health is promoted.

There is a consistent core staff team in place. Staff know the young people and their needs; they are committed to the young people. Staff say; 'We can't have a carbon cut out approach to working with the young people. Our premise of care is the same but with an individual approach'. This means that young people receive individual care from a consistent staff team.

The home works closely with parents and placing authorities. Where appropriate parents are kept up to date with their child's progress. The home works with families to try to ensure there is consistency across all aspects of young people's lives. Multi-agency working is embedded within staff practice. A social worker said; 'The staff team appear to be professional, well trained and to have good skills to enable them to engage well with young people'. Young people benefit emotionally from this consistency through the professionals within their lives.

Young people have a behaviour management plan. The ethos of the home is of enabling young people to learn from their behaviours. The home encourages young people to behave in a manner that is socially acceptable. This in turn helps young people to learn about actions and consequences of behaviours. Regular key working sessions support young people with this. Young people have opportunity to modify and change their behaviours.

Keeping children and young people safe **adequate**

There has been an increase in safeguarding incidents within the home. Police involvement has increased within this inspection period. Young people have stated that they have not felt safe at times due to other young people's behaviour. Whilst staff have tried to manage these behaviours, poor matching of young people have led to an increase in unsettled behaviours. This has impacted negatively on the safety and wellbeing of young people within the home.

The matching of young people is not robust enough given the complexities of needs of the young people within the home. Young people have been exposed to other young people's challenging behaviour and on occasions have been drawn into other young people's negative behaviours. This has in turn impacted on the wellbeing and safety of young people.

Young people know how to make complaints. Where complaints have been made they have been swiftly responded to, investigated and feedback given to young people. This enables young people to feel listened to. However, young people have not been safeguarded as robustly as possible as thorough assessments have not been completed prior to new admissions.

Some young people's risk taking behaviour has reduced. This is due to high staffing levels and a commitment from the staff team to follow risk management plans. Multi-agency working ensures that young people and the community are safeguarded and any incidents that happen are passed onto the relevant agencies. Staff challenge any incidents of racism and bullying with the young people. There is a focus on rewarding positive behaviours. The home encourages young people to be actively involved with the monitoring of their behaviours. In turn, this encourages young people to engage within their risk management plans and behaviour modification rewards system.

The home focuses on de-escalation techniques with young people rather than physical interventions. Physical interventions are a last resort and when they do occur there is a thorough debrief with young people and a key working session. This provides a space for young people to reflect on the incident and have an opportunity to learn from their experiences. The home focuses on reparation. This encourages young people to take responsibility for their actions. Young people have opportunity to learn and change their risk taking behaviours.

Staff receive safeguarding training and have a robust knowledge of safeguarding procedures. There are safe recruitment procedures in place. Any allegations or concerns are dealt with quickly. This promotes young people's safety within the home.

Leadership and management **adequate**

The Registered Manager is qualified up to NVQ level 4 in Leadership and Management. She has considerable experience of working with young people with complex needs. The Registered Manager is child focused and supportive to her staff team. There is strong attendance at risk management meetings and any issues are

reported to the relevant professionals. The Police describe their involvement with the Registered Manager as being positive. This means that the risks some young people pose to the community are managed well.

Previous recommendations have been implemented but due to an unsettled period the maintenance of the home has not been consistent. The Registered Manager recognises this and has been proactive in trying to rectify any maintenance issues within the home. Despite this, young people and staff have continued to reside in a home that is in need of significant upkeep.

Admission assessments of young people are not robust resulting in young people being negatively impacted by other young people's behaviour. Whilst the Statement of Purpose describes a setting offering medium to long term care of young people this has not been the consistent pattern of care for young people. The Registered manager has ensured that young people have been moved on to alternative placements more suited to meet their needs. Despite the hard work of the Registered Manager to try to achieve this, young people have been negatively impacted by other young people's risk taking behaviours.

There is a development plan in place. Young people have contributed to their own development plan and what they want to see happen within the home. This empowers young people and gives them a sense of investment within the home.

Training is underdeveloped and means that staff have not received in depth training in specific areas that the home focuses on. Staff rely on their experience rather than on current learning and guidance. For example, staff have not received up to date and in depth training on working with young people with sexually harmful behaviour. This means that staff are not equipped to deal with presenting behaviours.

Formal supervisions have not been consistent due to the home having had an unsettled period. Whilst staff say they feel supported the lack of formal and quality supervision means that staff have not had opportunity to reflect on their practice.

The Registered Manager has strong oversight of the home. There is consistent oversight of incidents and physical interventions. This means that any practice issues are picked up on with staff.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.