

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020606
Inspector	Matthew Hedges
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	Louise Ann Tolley
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	08/10/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
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 was last inspected on 25 March 2014. It was judged as making satisfactory progress. No requirements or recommendations were made.

The Registered Manager was away from the home between January 2014 and June 2014. Arrangements to cover this absence were in place. This had a significant effect on the home. The Registered Manager was reflective about this and identified a number of areas that still needed to improve. These include the systems in place for monitoring the home, the home's development plan and some other records. This has hindered the progress that the home could make since the last inspection.

Staff know young people well. The home provides individual plans for each young person. The quality of these plans is mixed and they are not always updated in a timely way. The impact of this is reduced by the relationships that exist between staff and young people. Young people talk positively about the care they receive and particularly about the staff. Young people are clear that they feel safe in the home.

Most young people achieve good outcomes and attend school or college placements. Young people also make good progress in developing their independence skills. This helps to prepare them for adult life. Some young people have experienced significant difficulties since the last inspection. This has affected their emotional well-

being and has resulted in some challenging and risky behaviours. This has had an impact on young people and the outcomes that they could achieve. Generally, this has been well managed by the staff team.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private childcare organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
28/11/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	good progress
06/11/2012	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)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	21/11/2014
21 (2001)	make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 21 (1))	07/11/2014
26 (2001)	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all staff in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 26	07/11/2014

	(3) (d))	
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training. (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	07/11/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which is kept up to date. (Regulation 28 (1) (b))	07/11/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	07/11/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Where a child goes missing and there is concern for their welfare, or at the request of a child who has been missing, staff arrange a meeting between the child and the responsible authority in private to consider the reasons for the child going missing. The home considers with the responsible authority what action should be taken to prevent the child going missing in future. Any concerns arising about the placement are addressed, as far as possible, in conjunction with the responsible authority. (NMS 5.9)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Outcomes for young people are mixed.

Most young people attend school and college placements regularly. Attendance has improved in some cases and this promotes young people's attainment. Young people are proud of what they achieve and this develops their self-esteem. Other young people's attendance has been mixed since the last inspection, limiting the educational progress they can make.

Young people develop good independence skills that prepare them for adult life. One young person felt that their 'skills have really improved' since living at the home. Another stated that the home is 'great at moving me forward and getting me ready for my future'. Professionals also comment positively about this. One social worker said that a young person was 'doing so much better' concerning their independence. A structured programme of activities including budgeting, travel and practical tasks such as shopping and cooking underpins this. Young people undertake this programme at a level that is suitable for their individual needs and abilities. This ensures that young people develop the skills they need in a safe and supported way.

Young people see their family and other people that are important to them. This helps young people to sustain important relationships and helps them to understand their backgrounds. One young person explained that they had moved a long way from their home. They had found this 'difficult' but seeing family regularly helped them to cope with this.

Most young people's physical health is generally good. Some young people do smoke but are offered support to give up. Alcohol and substance misuse is rare. However, some young people's psychological health has deteriorated and this has impacted on their overall well-being. Risk taking behaviour has also increased because of this. This has had a significant impact on them and their emotional resilience.

Young people engage enthusiastically with events within the home, discussing different cultures and religions. This promotes tolerance and develops young people's understanding of different beliefs.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people are supported by a caring staff team. Sound relationships exist between staff and young people; this helps young people to feel safe. Young people talk positively about their relationships with staff. One young person said 'the staff

are the best thing about the home. They are not just in it for the money, they really care about you'. Another said that 'staff have really helped me'. A parent also commented that staff had been 'very supportive'; they felt that their child was happy living at the home. Staff support young people to undertake a range of positive activities. This further develops the relationships between staff and young people.

Young people are cared for in line with individual care plans. The quality of these plans is mixed. Some are detailed and highly personalised. Others are generic and are not kept up to date. Targets are identified for young people and their progress is recorded. These targets do not always link clearly to targets in other documents including education plans. The impact of this is reduced by staff who know young people well and work closely with their education placements.

Young people's views are sought in relation to their care. Staff talk to young people prior to reviews and other meetings to prepare them. If young people do not wish to attend meetings then staff represent their views. This ensures that young people feel that their opinions are valued. Young people are helped to understand that it is not always possible to act on their wishes. Young people know how to complain and their complaints are well handled by managers. This further reinforces to young people that their views are taken seriously.

Young people have regular keywork sessions with staff and comment positively about these. These sessions do not always address key issues. In addition, recording of these sessions is basic and does not identify follow up actions that are required. This means that opportunities are missed to support young people.

Staff work hard to support young people's education placements and will often attend school with young people throughout the day. This ensures that risks are reduced and attendance increases for some young people.

New medication recording systems are in place. Risk assessments are not always kept up to date and this means that conflicting information regarding medication is held. In addition, the temperature of the medication room is not monitored. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's medical needs which reduces the impact this has.

The Registered Manager ensures that young people have access to the support they need from other agencies. Sometimes this support is not provided in a timely way. Other professionals acknowledge this. Independent reviewing officers and social workers confirm that the home 'does all they can to chase this for young people'. These efforts reduce the impact on young people and ensure that they feel cared for.

The home is appropriately designed and maintained. Some areas of the home have recently been redecorated by young people. This helps young people to take pride in their surroundings.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people say that they feel safe in the home and identify staff that they can talk to. One young person said 'the home couldn't improve anything, it is safe and I feel safe being here.'

Positive behaviour is promoted and celebrated. Behaviour plans are individualised and contain young people's views. Other risk assessments are mixed in terms of their quality. Some are not kept up to date and are not suitably individualised, others are highly effective. Staff have a sound knowledge of young people's needs and backgrounds and this helps to limit the impact of this.

Rewards are common within the home and are used appropriately. Consequences for negative behaviour are reasonable and clearly recorded. This ensures that young people are treated fairly and develop an understanding of the impact of their own behaviour on others. Staff and young people do not identify bullying as an issue at the home.

Not all staff have up to date training in physical restraint or self-harm. This impacts on their confidence. A number of appropriately trained staff help to limit the effect on young people. Physical restraint is only used to protect young people or others from harm. Its use is proportionate and generally well recorded. This ensures that young people are kept safe.

Staff understand the home's missing from home policy and the risks associated with young people going missing. Some young people have been missing from the home but this has reduced, in some cases significantly. When young people return they are welcomed back to the home. Not all young people see their social worker or an independent person following an incident where they have been missing. Return interviews are undertaken by staff which reduces the impact of this.

Police generally talk positively about the home's work when young people are missing. They also highlight good partnership working with the home and staff's awareness of child sexual exploitation as particular strengths. This helps to keep young people safe.

Staff employed directly by the home are subject to a robust recruitment process. Since the last inspection the home has also used staff provided by several recruitment agencies. Some of these staff did not have full recruitment checks in place. This was due to the agency's policy of not seeking full employment histories or verification of the applicants' reasons for leaving previous employment. The impact on young people is reduced by other checks that exist. Staff understand the whistle blowing policy and allegations against staff members are well handled by managers. This helps to protect young people from unsafe adults.

There is a detailed risk assessment in relation to the home's location. Potential risks

are identified and are reduced where required. This helps young people to feel safe and ensures staff are aware of potential risks in the local community.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home is managed by an experienced and suitably qualified Registered Manager who is committed to improvement. The Registered Manager has been in post since 2007 and understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. The Registered Manager was away from the home for a six month period at the start of 2014. Since her return, she has identified a number of areas that require improvement.

There is a process in place to monitor the effectiveness of the home every 3 months. The last report was completed in June 2014 and did not provide adequate detail. A further report was not complete. A development plan is in place and provides some evidence that young people have been consulted with. Other areas of the plan lack detail and are not up to date. Key issues, including staff training are not effectively addressed. This limits the progress that the home can make. An independent visitor visits the home every month. There is evidence that young people are consulted as part of this process. This ensures that young people have the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have.

The home's statement of purpose outlines the key principles of the home but lacks clarity in some areas. This includes detail regarding the therapeutic support available to young people. This has limited impact on young people.

Training provision for staff is mixed. Staff follow a good induction programme and the home supports most staff to achieve an appropriate level three qualification. Other areas of training are not available to all staff or are out of date. The home employs some staff from recruitment agencies and this is particularly relevant to them. This means that some staff do not have the skills or knowledge they need. This impacts on the support they can offer to young people and other staff need to cover the shortfalls. The home's training record is also not up to date. This makes it hard to accurately identify some staff's training needs.

Eleven different agency staff have been used since the last inspection. The Registered Manager seeks to limit the impact of this by their deployment alongside experienced permanent staff. The home is actively recruiting to vacant posts.

Staff speak highly of the support and leadership offered by the Registered Manager. Team meetings and supervisions are regular. This supports staff and improves the support they offer to young people.

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.