

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020608
Inspector	Trevor Hall
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	Karla Louise Dovey
Date of last inspection	04/02/2014

Inspection date	02/07/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The home provides good outcomes and quality of care for the majority of the young people in residence. Care is provided on two sites, one caters for three young people, whilst one young person is accommodated in a nearby single placement. Systems and practices reflect an appropriate focus on safeguarding and meeting young people's identified needs. However, there is a need to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of all children accommodated with in the registration, particularly those that choose to absent themselves from care on a regular basis.

Care planning and day-to-day care particularly in the multi-occupancy home is highly individualised and meets the identified needs of the young people in residence, this coupled with good staff ratios support the provision of effective care. Care plans and placement plans demonstrate detailed, robust and comprehensive planning for each young person's assessed needs.

Young people have ample opportunities to engage with staff and they develop open and meaningful relationships with them. They benefit from an effective and fair behaviour management policy that is consistently applied. Young people's education is for the most part well organised, with them benefiting from the support and guidance from staff in both their attendance and their achievements. There is

however, a need to ensure that all young people have an appropriate educational package

The safeguarding of young people is on the whole adequate and this includes challenging behaviours that may place them at risk. This is supported by good health and safety systems through-out both residential settings. Young people know what is expected of them and feel settled because of this. There is strong leadership which results in young people being cared for by a motivated and professional staff team. Good records are maintained to support the work undertaken at the home. There are effective arrangements for monitoring service delivery and this contributes to the good quality care that young people receive.

One statutory requirement has been generated by this inspection. This refers to the need to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated and specifically refers to concerns about young people placing themselves at risk by absenting themselves from care on a regular basis. One recommendation has also been raised, this refers to the need to ensure that every young person is supported to attend school, college or alternative provision regularly. The home has been assessed as being adequate in respect of overall effectiveness.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a range of children's services within a private care organisation. The home is registered to offer care and accommodation to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties; three are accommodated in the main house, one in a satellite unit some little distance away.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2014	Interim	good progress
12/07/2013	Full	adequate
26/11/2012	Interim	good progress
16/05/2012	Full	adequate

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
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated (Reg 11(1)(a))	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children are supported to attend school, college or alternative

provision regularly (NMS 8.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people generally benefit from the security and structure that exists within the two home's covered by this registration. Boundaries, are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying them their individuality. Young people within this setting say that they generally have positive relationships with the staff group, which they enjoy. These relationships are based upon mutual respect and positive regard; this helps them to build up their emotional resilience and improve their self-image.

Young people make good progress, when looked at in relation to their individual starting points. They learn to appreciate by talking through issues with staff the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. Staff promote a positive ethos and culture that embraces diversity and respects difference. Young people were seen to freely express their feelings and opinions, in a safe and nurturing environment. This promotes positive behaviours, assists young people to understand the consequences of their actions, and encourages alternative and more acceptable responses.

Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, take regular exercise and are encouraged to eat healthy food options. New and different food options are regularly introduced to the home's menu to expand young people's food experience, nutritional knowledge and confidence.

All young people are provided with a personal education plan based upon each young person's identified need. Whilst it is true that every young person has improved their educational attendance and attainment since admission, not every young person currently has an educational placement that matches their educational plan. Current residents either attend the organisations own education unit, local schools or colleges, or a provided with home tuition, whilst a suitable education package can be found. There is, however, clear evidence of them building on their existing knowledge and developing their skills. Young people are assisted to develop a good work ethic and are encouraged to value their educational achievements. Young people are involved in all decisions that affect them and the running of the home. They are consulted about changes to the house rules, activities that are being planned, the home's menu and about reviews of their care planning arrangements.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities both in the home and out in the surrounding area. This gives young people opportunities to develop their social skills and increase interactions with peers and the wider community.

Young people maintain helpful and close relationships with important people in their lives. Particular attention is given to planning and organising family contact and staff,

where appropriate, involve young people and family members, so ensure that the arrangements made are appropriate and safe. This ensures that young people experience positive contact with their families, thus promoting a strong understanding of their backgrounds and a positive self-image.

Young people learn about personal responsibility and growing independence. The staff team is committed to providing young people with individualised support, focused on their personal development needs and individual circumstances. Young people are aware of the importance of developing their personal skills. Staff prioritise the work they do with young people in this area to better prepare them for a successful transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

good

Young people living at the home receive a consistent and good standard of care. Care planning is highly personalised and focused on the individual needs of each young person and is regularly reviewed and updated. This ensures young people's progress and development are effectively monitored. Placement plans are detailed and well organised.

The stable and enthusiastic staff team work diligently to bring about improved outcomes for young people. They place young people's well-being at the centre of their practice and consistently implement individualised behaviour management plans. Young people on the whole respond well to this, and challenging behaviours significantly reduce as relationships develop and young people settle into the home. Young people enjoy generally positive and constructive relationships with the staff team who have a good understanding of their needs. This encourages young people to express themselves positively and has enabled them to gain in self-confidence.

The manager and staff team actively seek the views of young people. Communication between staff and young people is good, which results in staff being able to respond effectively; this ensures that young people's needs and wishes are well known. Young people have regular meetings with their key workers to discuss progress and any issues of concern. They confirm that they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in line with their individual needs. As a result, they feel valued, take ownership of their placement and actively influence the running of the home. Where it has not been possible to implement a young person's request or ideas the reasons why are fully shared with the young person. This helps to promote meaningful relationships between the young people and the staff group based upon honest and open dialogue.

Young people have a voice and understand that they can influence the running of the home. They are aware that they can make complaints and representations and understand that staff take such matters seriously. The young people's guide provides details of how to complain; both internally and to appropriate external agencies.

Details are also available on notice boards within the home. Three complaints have been logged since the home's last inspection all were resolved appropriately and well recorded.

Young people's education and health are well supported by staff members. Each young person benefits from attendance at routine check-ups and planned healthcare interventions. All staff are trained in first aid and medication administration. This is supported by a robust system for the safe handling, administration, storage and disposal of medication. Health needs and healthy living are well promoted in the home and appropriate lifestyle choices are encouraged.

The staff team have high expectations for the young people they care for and place great importance on regular school attendance and on high attainment. Young people with records of previous poor attendance are supported to re-engage with education, either through a gradual re-introduction, staff support in school, or through short periods of home tuition. Successes are celebrated, which improves individual self-confidence and personal self-esteem. Good communications with the educational establishments attended ensures that the young people receive the support they need, to make progress and achieve their potential.

Young people are encouraged to partake in a wide range of activities both in the home and in the local community. Young people have the opportunity to attend local clubs and access local leisure and sports facilities. These activities are not only enjoyable but purposeful and have enabled the young people to develop their personal confidence and to socialise with a wider group of young people.

Young people present well, are appropriately dressed and have sufficient belongings to meet their needs. They receive pocket money and appropriate allowances to help purchase clothing and toiletries of their choice.

Young people enjoy living in a semi- rural area, in a home which provides sufficient space to meet their needs. The home is decorated to a good standard and young people have good quality furniture in their bedrooms and ample storage for personal clothes and belongings. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as comfortable and personal as possible. The home enjoys good links to local facilities and is within relatively easy reach of good transport links. The home provides transport so that young people are able to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities, to go shopping and attend contact visits with their families. The outside environment is good; the home has extensive grounds which are available for young people's recreational use.

Keeping children and young people safe **adequate**

Young people said they felt safe and well looked after at the home. They could identify a large number of people they would feel happy talking to if they had any problems or worry's. Young people are protected from harm or abuse by robust policies and procedure which are adhered to in practice. The staff team receive regular training in safeguarding to ensure they are up to date with current practice and know what to do to protect young people from harm.

The home's individual care plans are supported by very good up-to-date behaviour management plans. These clearly identify young people's individual vulnerabilities, behavioural triggers and provide staff with strategies to deal with identified behaviours. Staff have a good understanding of the individual young people's needs and vulnerabilities. They take a positive approach to managing behaviour by celebrating young people's achievements and by implementing individual reward schemes.

Staff, guided by other relevant professionals, work hard to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours, rather than purely punishing those behaviours identified as being unacceptable. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour and better prepares them to interact positively with the wider community.

Young people confirm that the use of sanctions is minimal, fair and consistent. Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding and responsibility.

Young people and staff all confirm that physical intervention by staff is a measure of last resort, which is only used to keep everyone safe. Records clearly show that the number of incidents requiring physical intervention reduces as young people settle into their placements and develop meaningful relationships with the staff team. Five physical interventions have taken place since the home's last inspection. All of these interventions were necessary, appropriately applied and well recorded.

The resolution of most incidents is through the skilful application of staff support and the sensitive use of conflict resolution techniques. Following each physical intervention, the home's manager, meets with young people and the staff involved, checks the home's record to ensure that the intervention was necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, receive any medical attention if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are informed. Bullying is not currently seen as an issue at the home by the staff or the young people.

Staff are very mindful of young people's rights to appropriate privacy and are sensitive to their feelings. The home has an appropriate policy on the conducting of

room searches, which is known by all. Rooms are only searched when there is a suspicion that illegal or dangerous substances or items may threaten the safety of either residents or staff. Twelve room searches have been conducted since the home's last inspection. All of these searches involve one young person, who is absenting himself from care frequently and is a known substance abuser, as such his room is searched following each episode of absence from care. In all cases the policy was correctly applied and the results were effectively recorded.

Staff manage unauthorised absence well, they are pro-active in looking for young people who are out without permission and established protocols and positive relationships with the local police complement this practice. The number of incidents of young people absenting themselves has increased following a recent new admission to the home and the resurgence of this behaviour from an established resident. Despite staffs best efforts and the robust application of the home's procedures, the lack of positive impact on curbing this risk taking behaviour is a cause for concern, as currently the home is struggling to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of all the young people currently in residence. Staff are aware of the potential reasons why young people go missing and try to use this insight to assist young people in managing their feelings and frustrations in a more productive manner; however, currently this is not proving effective in all cases.

The home has a vigorous health and safety regime, which ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection, recruitment and retention of staff. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Leadership and management

adequate

Young people live in a home that is on the whole effectively managed, the home's Registered Manager provides good leadership and support to the staff team. This ensures that they provide consistent and focused care to young people. The Registered Manager has been registered for over seven years, is competent, suitably experienced and appropriately qualified. She is an effective leader who actively promotes high expectations, which results in staff being motivated to deliver good child care that is tailored to meet each young person's individual needs. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the progress most young people make whilst living in the home.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are clearly written, accessible and comprehensive. Young people, their families and placing authorities'

are provided with all required information about the services and facilities offered by the home.

Regular team meetings provide staff with opportunities to discuss the needs of the young people in residence and to be actively involved in the development of the service. Staff report that the manager provides good leadership and support and she ensures that they receive professional supervision on a regular basis.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is well managed, where care staff are motivated and provide high levels of individual support. Staffing ratios are good and shifts are planned to meet the young people's individual needs. Consistent leadership ensures that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

The home's management of young people missing from care, whilst following existing protocols and guidance is not always effective. This has led to some young people placing themselves at risk and has hampered the home's ability to adequately promote their welfare at all times. Despite the home's efforts to engage with these young people, this has had only limited success and as such a degree of risk remains.

The home has a good system for dealing effectively with young people's complaints. Young people confirmed their awareness of the home's complaints system and stated they would use it with confidence. Three formal complaints have been made since the home's last inspection; all were from young people complaining about other young people's behaviour. These were appropriately resolved and were comprehensively recorded.

Regular internal quality assurance monitoring of the home's records and operational systems, is undertaken by the home's Registered Manager. She regularly checks all reporting systems and comments if any record fails to meet either the home's policies and procedures or national regulations or minimum standards. Internal monitoring reports are produced each month, which help the home to develop its practice and ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. These reports are shared periodically with Ofsted as required.

Regular external monitoring visits are undertaken each month. These provide additional quality assurance and include consultation with young people wherever possible. Reports generated from these visits are comprehensive and give an accurate reflection of the functioning of the home and directly link into the home's development plan. These reports are routinely shared with Ofsted as required by regulation.

All staff members comment positively about the manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes. The staff team are positive about the training and induction programme they receive and feel it equips them to meet the needs of their young people they care for. Additional training and guidance specific to young people's identified needs is provided once the need is

identified. Core training covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and to enhance the well-being of young people in their care.

All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and appropriate action is taken following incidents.

Young people's care records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they choose to access these documents.

No statutory requirements or recommendation were made at the home's last interim inspection. This inspection has generated one requirement and one recommendation. These relate to ensuring that the home promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated and ensure that children are supported to attend school, college or alternative education provision regularly.

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.