

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020611
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	Brenda Lucille Nurse
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	24/09/2014
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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	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Since the last inspection, some young people have moved in and out of the home. These young people moved in quickly and in some cases without sufficient planning. This affected the home significantly and led to an unsettled period. During this period, young people's behaviour deteriorated resulting in a number of calls to the police. The home is now more settled and this has improved.

Generally young people's outcomes improve. Care plans are individualised and the home provides an adequate quality of care.

The Registered Manager and staff focus on supporting young people in education. This has been very successful. Young people are attending their education placements more regularly and are achieving more because of this.

Young people talk positively about the care they receive, their relationships with staff, and their feeling of safety.

The Registered Manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and has a development plan in place.

This inspection has identified a number of regulatory shortfalls. These include the

effectiveness of impact assessments and the timeliness of updates to placement plans. Other areas relate to the homes safeguarding policy, administrative processes, overall monitoring, training and service development. Another significant concern is the maintenance and upkeep of the home. In addition young people do not always see their social worker if they have been missing. The positive relationships that exist between staff and young people help to minimise the impact these shortfalls have on young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to accommodate up to three young people of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2014	Interim	good progress
18/12/2013	Full	good
19/02/2013	Interim	good progress
24/10/2012	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)	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))	07/11/2014
4 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 4 (6))	07/11/2014
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	07/11/2014

16 (2001)	prepare and implement a written policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 16 (1) (b))	07/11/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record must include the duration of the measure of restraint (Regulation 17B (4) (a))	07/11/2014
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children are not used except for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting welfare and where the child's placing authority consents to the use of the measure in question (Regulation 22 (1) (a))	07/11/2014
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety (Regulation 23 (a))	07/11/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (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 includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child and is kept up to date (Regulation 28 (1) (b))	07/11/2014
31 (2001)	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 are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (d) and (e))	07/11/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and 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 have been mixed. Some young people have moved into the home in emergency situations. This resulted in a lack of planning and has impacted on young people's behaviour. During a two month period there was an increase in offending behaviour and risk taking. One young person described this period as, 'tense'. This hindered the progress that young people could make. This has now improved. The home is more settled and young people are making more positive progress.

Young people's physical health is generally good. Young people attend health appointments regularly and any actions are addressed. Overall, young people's use of drugs or other substances decreases. Some young people have stopped smoking since living at the home. Young people are becoming increasingly interested in healthy eating and exercise. This will help to promote good health throughout their life.

Young people are actively engaged in education. Attendance has improved significantly and young people are achieving more because of this. One parent said their child was, 'doing much better in school and because of this they have grown in confidence.' Another parent said, 'my child is happier, which makes me happier'. Young people are proud of their achievements. This helps to build self-confidence.

Young people develop the skills they need for adult life. Young people's independence skills have grown, as does their pride in their abilities. One social worker commented that the young person they support, 'is well prepared for life as a consequence of the home'. Skills learnt at school such as cooking are further developed within the home. This maximises young people's chances for learning. One young person reflected that their motivation has improved since living at the home.

Young people see their family and other people that are important to them. This ensures that young people have an understanding of their background and their identity.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people generally enjoy strong, positive relationships with staff who are clearly committed to their well-being. Staff understand young people's individual needs and the impact that living away from family can have. Staff work hard to ensure that young people feel at ease. A young person said that staff, 'are helpful and take an interest and have time for you.' Parents comment positively about the relationships

that exist and the support staff offer to young people. One parent said, 'staff are friendly', another felt that, 'the staff are brilliant'. Staff and young people work together to identify positive activities. Favourite activities include hiking, sports, cinema and trips to theme parks. Staff and young people also went on holiday to a caravan over the summer. These activities further develop positive relationships.

Young people are cared for in line with individualised placement plans. These plans are not always reviewed or revised as necessary. Staff know young people well which helps to limit the impact of this.

Key work sessions are held regularly and young people are positive about these. Young people's views are actively sought and influence the running of the home. One young person said that 'staff listen to what we say'. Staff help young people to understand why their wishes cannot always be acted upon. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure. Complaints are well handled by the Registered Manager. This further reinforces to young people that their views are valued.

Staff work hard to support young people's education placements and realise the importance of this. One headteacher stated that the home, 'supports young people's learning'. They went on to say that, 'if the young person stays at the home they should do well'. Other education staff highlight, 'excellent communication and staff support' as a strength of the home. This ensures that young people are supported to reach their potential and barriers affecting their education are reduced.

The arrangements for storing and administering medication are robust. This protects young people and ensures specific health needs are met.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are safe and say that they feel safe.

Generally, staff set consistent boundaries for young people alongside clear, well-written, highly individualised behaviour management plans. These plans are written with young people. This creates a sense of ownership for young people and an increased sense of responsibility for their own actions. Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Some consequences exist for negative behaviour. Young people feel that this is fair. One young person said that, 'the staff are respectful' and that they, 'are good at calming me down and explaining the consequences of my behaviour'. Staff and young people do not identify bullying as an issue at the home.

There have been a number of physical restraints since the last inspection. The majority of these coincided with an unsettled period at the home and the frequency has now reduced. The restraints were used to keep staff or young people safe. The recording of these incidents do not always detail the length of the restraint. Training for staff in restraint and behaviour management is not always updated on time. The

impact of this on young people is reduced due to the relationships that exist. All young people identified that there were members of staff they felt comfortable to talk to.

The relationships between young people and specific staff have resulted in an increase in complaints against staff. This started during the home's unsettled period. These complaints are generally well handled however on one of these occasions; the home did not follow the guidance set out in their safeguarding policy. Specifically, they did not formally refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The impact of this was minimised by the home taking appropriate action in line with their disciplinary policy.

Staff recruitment processes are robust for new staff and staff are aware of the whistleblowing policy. This protects young people.

Impact assessments do not identify key issues. They do not explore whether the home can make proper provision for the welfare of the young people moving in. In addition they do not consider the impact on the welfare of the young people currently living in the home. This led to an unsettled period since the last inspection. This period is now over and the home is more settled.

Missing from home episodes have reduced. Staff are aware of the risks that relate to missing incidents. They work hard to prevent young people from going missing. If young people do go missing staff respond well to this and have clear arrangements agreed with local police. Each young person has an individual risk assessment relating to missing. This is written with the young person and is highly individualised and very detailed. This protects young people from harm and increases their awareness of risk. When young people return they are welcomed back appropriately by staff. Young people do not always have the chance to meet privately with their placing authority when they return. This limits the support available to young people however the impact is reduced by their relationships with staff

The home is not free from avoidable hazards. Specifically young people can climb onto the roof of the house. This was a particular issue when the home was unsettled. The frequency of this has reduced and the impact lessened by the fact that one particular bedroom is no longer in use.

The home uses door alarms to ensure young people are safe. However, consent for using this type of surveillance monitoring is not always agreed by the placing authority.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The home is run by an experienced Registered Manager who is suitably qualified and has been in post for over three years.

The Registered Manager recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the home and a development plan is in place. There are no reoccurring shortfalls from the last inspection.

Monitoring of key issues within the home is not robustly evidenced. Quarterly reports are produced but lack detail and do not identify patterns and trends. This limits the homes ability to improve the quality of care they offer. An independent visitor visits the home every month. The report produced is detailed, includes consultation with young people, and identifies key actions. A copy of the report is provided to the home, however this is often delayed. This delay limits the speed with which improvements can be made.

The home is poorly maintained and decorated. Some work has been done to improve the lounge, dining room and other areas downstairs. However, the upstairs areas are wholly inadequate. The walls are not decorated and the carpets are in a poor state of repair. The shower was broken for several months and the bathroom is dirty. Young people's bedrooms also need to be redecorated. This does not promote a sense of pride in the home for either staff or young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose states that young people will move to the home in a planned way. Several young people have moved to the home since the last inspection in an emergency. This is not consistent with the Statement of Purpose and had a significant impact on one occasion. Other key information is also missing. Specifically the details of the therapist linked to the home. This leads to confusion regarding the services the home offers.

Some staff do not receive appropriate training. This specifically relates to restraint training, first aid and safeguarding. This impacts on some staffs knowledge and confidence. The impact on young people is reduced by other staff within the team being appropriately trained.

Serious events are notified to HMCI, Ofsted in a timely way. Supervisions are held regularly and address development issues. Team meetings are held every month. These meetings address a number of issues relating to the home and young people. Staff comment positively about the support that they receive from the Registered Manager.

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.