

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389174
Inspector	Kenneth Smith
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	New Horizon Centre Limited
Registered person address	European Care Group 2 Parklands, Rednal BIRMINGHAM B45 9PZ
Responsible individual	Amanda Elizabeth Morgan-Taylor
Registered manager	Anna Frances Tuffey
Date of last inspection	07/01/2014

Inspection date	25/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. Short breaks, long-term assessment and bridging placements are provided.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/09/2013	Full	good
31/01/2013	Interim	good progress
07/08/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's care includes the promotion of their individual identity & providing relevant information on each care plan (NMS 2.1)
- ensure all staff understand, share and implement the homes ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children; specifically in the promotion of privacy for children and young people (NMN 3.4)
- ensure the needs of children are consistently met in the management of behaviour; specifically complete behavioural management plans in sufficient detail and ensure these are consistently implemented (NMS 3.7)
- ensure all staff receive regular supervision. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children who come for short breaks enjoy their time here. Examples of children enthusiastically asking parents when they are coming again were noted. Some young people have made excellent progress, for example one young person has developed a 'normal diet' having previously been very limited in the self selection of foods tolerated. The home has planned carefully to achieve this without any upset to the young person.

Children who have come to the home for longer periods, including after family breakdown, have settled quickly through the skilled care of staff. Staff work successfully to develop long term and effective relationships with young people.

Children's families are known to the service and they provide flexible support, both in the time made available for short breaks and in the type of support, for example, day care in holiday periods. Situations such as illness of family members have been supported through additional stays. As a consequence some families have been able to cope through difficult times. This is a notable outcome for a short break service. The strong links between family and home are a central strength of the service.

Children here have all achieved good attendance at education when living in the home.

Children enjoy home and community-based activities which are stimulating and have regard to their likes and dislikes. Ensuring that their stay is a positive experience and one which contributes to their wider personal growth was evident in the diverse activities sometimes undertaken and the good use of the period of school holidays in which this inspection occurred.

Quality of care **adequate**

Children receive an adequate quality of care with many good features. Social workers spoken to about the care of children were all positive about the success of the home in providing a suitably caring environment. The needs of children who have short breaks here are well understood and placements are successful. The warm relationships between the core staff and children staying in the home underpin the experience and this was evident through observation and discussion. Agency or new staff less well known to the children all conducted themselves with care and compassion, but the turnover of staff does mean that children are periodically cared for by staff who they do not really know.

Children's health is very ably supported and maintained. Managers and staff are vigilant in ensuring they understand the health needs of each child. This is properly considered in advance of all admissions and preparations are made in advance of placements if those needs are new to the staff team. Medication is robustly and safely managed. A staff member on each shift has a lead role in administering medication, supported by someone who monitors and ensures the process is followed fully. The records underpinning this are sound. Medication storage is safe including provision for controlled drugs if needed.

Children enjoy good food in the home which caters to their individual tastes. Meal times are well structured to be as 'family like' as possible, whilst any child who struggles with group activity is also sensitively supported.

Children are cared for in line with their placement plans, but the detail of these are at times insufficient. At the time of this inspection this was being actively addressed. However, it was noted that experienced staff, who know children well, may be working to their own understanding because of lack of depth in plans; new staff have only limited guidance to work with. This has a specific impact on the consistency with which behaviour management or other plans are implemented.

Cultural diversity and identity issues are not recorded on care plans although there is a space to do this. The opportunity to describe and help staff to reinforce identity is not routinely taken.

Children and young people require assistance with many personal care tasks. This is done sensitively and mostly discreetly. However, this has occasionally fallen short of ensuring children experience privacy as close to that enjoyed by their peers as practical. For example, bathing should not happen with the door open.

The views of children are drawn into the running of the home when they can. There are questionnaires, using symbols, which are used to help gather views. Children's families are also encouraged to contribute, and plans for each child seek to use that family information.

The environment of the home is maintained to a good standard. The manager is able to request improvements and these are considered and acted upon. For critical items, for example a new refrigerator, this has been very prompt. The home provides a good and open space which children are free to use. There is a secure garden that is widely used and has some fixed play equipment and space for water play or ball games. The external doors are kept secure and this is necessary for the safety of all young people staying here. It does not detract from the 'feel' of the home, which is generally homely although challenged by the high level of need.

There is liaison between the home and schools, keeping up communication books that are usually used between school and family home, and when transporting some children to school.

The staff in the home enthusiastically support children to undertake a wide range of activities. Staffing numbers and the limited pool of drivers inhibits this slightly, but staff find activities they can do inside the home or within walking distance to compensate for this.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

The safety of children is taken very seriously by all involved in the operation of the home. Children spoken to and observed felt safe and secure in home, they were comfortable with staff. Staff manage interactions between children diligently, allowing freedom to interact whilst being close at hand and taking action if behaviour towards each other is less than respectful. Hence the potential for bullying within the home is completely minimised by the staffing levels and their skill and vigilance.

The Registered Manager of the home has proactively contacted the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) twice in the last year. Both these were issues which were passed back to the home to manage, but demonstrate the transparency and good reporting practice to which the manager is committed.

The home has a missing from home protocol; in the last year there have been no incidents of children being missing from the home. Care plans include photographs and information to use should such an event occur.

The practice in home promotes positive behaviour through reward and encouragement. This is successful in enabling some complex and challenging children to have stays which are often relaxed and without incident. The staff in the home are trained in de-escalating and physically intervening, the latter is used only as a last resort. The numbers of interventions is superficially high, but this represents good recording practice so all 'hands on' events are included and approximately two thirds of these were minor interventions that did not constitute 'restraint'. The holds used when needed are appropriate; the staff do not and have not used any prone restraints.

Children live in a safe environment that is kept free from hazards and supervision levels also protect children from this. Fire safety is managed robustly and equipment is serviced and tested frequently. Each child has a personal evacuation plan, ensuring staff know what to do in the event of fire whoever is staying.

Leadership and management **good**

The Registered Manager has been in post for almost one year. She has strong knowledge of this service having worked within it for several years before taking this role. She is actively working towards attainment of a level 5 qualification, and provides good leadership. This year has included a relatively high turnover of staff in the home and some changes to external management. She has helped the home through this period.

The home operates within its statement of purpose and this is a clear and bespoke document for this home. It has recently been updated.

Staffing in the home is challenge because of the fluctuating numbers of children accommodated. The arrangements to manage this work; a core staff team provide substantial cover and the use of bank and some agency staff ensures there is always a satisfactory staff complement.

Staff receive training for their roles and whilst some legacy issues (of previously limiting access to NVQ training) have meant that attaining level 3 qualifications for all permanent staff has been behind, all relevant staff have now attained this or are now enrolled and the managers have done all they can. Other aspects of training are strong, with refresher training given systematically on all core topics. First aid training is well rolled out and the majority of staff are trained first aiders. Informal support to staff is good, but formal supervision has not occurred as frequently as prescribed for several staff members.

Children living in the home have their care reviewed properly, which does depend on their situation and legal status. Examples of managers in the home proactively addressing the situations of young people in bridging placements were noted.

Regulation 33 reports are undertaken regularly by an independent person. The report process is thorough and provides actions which the manager follows up, for example, running the latest child protection policy past the LADO, and prompting completion of staff appraisals. Regulation 34 reporting occurs and ensures the manager is aware and addressing issues of quality. The manager has completed a location risk assessment in consultation with other stakeholders and this complies with the newly amended regulation.

Complaints are positively handled. There has only been one complaint but this has been taken seriously including transparent practice in sharing all issues with LADO and Ofsted.

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.