

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	08/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC007284
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Horizon Residential Children's Home
Registered person address	46 The Ridgeway, North Harrow, HARROW, Middlesex, HA2 7QN

Responsible individual	Mehnaaz Chaudhary
Registered manager	St Clair Simmons Muhammad
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	08/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC007284

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Referral processes and risk assessments for admissions carefully consider the impact of new residents on existing young people in the home. Leaders and managers clearly prioritise this to ensure the stability of young people already living at the home.
- Managers and staff are able to consistently set and maintain boundaries with young people, which has the impact of creating respect, positive relationships, trust and security.
- Creating and maintaining positive relationships with young people is at the centre of good practice at this home. Young people feel respected, important and that staff care about them. They feel attached to the home when they move on and some continue to visit
- Managers and staff are highly skilled and experienced. As a team, they work consistently together and show commitment towards young people, despite extreme challenges at times. This home does not give up on young people and often agrees subsequent placements after custody or specialist need placements.
- Young people make progress from their starting points, often where they have not been able to do so before. The staff work hard with exceptionally complex young people, understanding and managing behaviours with tolerance. Individual needs and personal connections, supported and maintained by a highly professional staff team make young people feel valued.
- The home is held in high regard by placing authorities. A commissioning officer sums up their strengths as 'partnership, safeguarding, flexibility and creative thinking in keeping complex young people safe.'
- Leaders and managers have addressed shortfalls from the previous inspection. There are no breaches of regulation. Areas for improvement include: robustness of monitoring reports, ensuring signatures on agreements for monitoring equipment and maintaining the home environment consistently to the highest standard. These are minor shortfalls, which do not affect young people's safety or well-being.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure the young people's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets their needs, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. The home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- Ensure monitoring equipment has a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of the placement. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 16, paragraph 3.16)

- Ensure that the independent person they appoint has the skills and understanding necessary to be rigorous enough to form an impartial judgement about the quality of the home's care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run home accommodates six young people. The home offers care to young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/10/2014	Full	Outstanding
03/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
<p>This home continues to provide an outstanding quality of care to young people, who make progress and learn to respect themselves and keep themselves safe. The Registered Manager and the staff team continue to provide an excellent service and commitment to the young people who live here and their families.</p> <p>Positive relationship building is at the centre of practice and is a strength of the success of the home. Professionals from a variety of agencies repeated the words 'go over and above' when talking about how the staff develop relationships with young people. Such relationships exhibit tolerance and commitment to complex young people. For example, one education provider says, 'Partnership work with the home makes it easier to help such a complex young person.'</p> <p>Staff persistently encourage discussion on difficult topics with young people. All young people know how to make complaints and know what they could do if they were unhappy.</p> <p>All young people attend school, college, employment or training. The organisation employs an educational coordinator whose role supports young people's progress, liaising with providers where there are difficulties, advocating, attending meetings and generally championing educational needs on their behalf. An additional part of this role is helping young people to develop a folder, which includes a personal statement, curriculum vitae, any qualifications, commendations, certificates and an individual action plan. This is an excellent resource, which builds self-esteem and confidence and gives young people a record of their achievements and short-term goals for the future.</p> <p>The home provides a range of activities for young people dependent on their age, understanding and individual needs. For example, one young person stays for after school clubs and another who is older, is trusted to take activity money to go to the cinema with friends. He says, 'I've been here for a while, I'm trusted to go out with my own friends, it feels normal, I like this trust.' All young people receive one-to-one activities every week, where they can choose an activity of their choice, such as cinema, bowling, swimming, restaurants. During school holidays, more ambitious activities such as 'Winter Wonderland', or 'Thorpe Park' are offered.</p> <p>Staff give high priority to health needs. They give detailed attention to health care plans and manage young people's complex needs in this area with good use of outside resources. For example, drug services, youth offending services, trauma team, child and adolescent mental health services and various educational providers including the virtual school.</p>	

Staff ensure young people develop independence skills by incorporating them into everyday living. Young people are continuously encouraged to develop these skills, for example doing their own washing, cleaning their rooms, helping to prepare meals. One young person says, 'This is one of the places where you could find the friendliest team of staff, helpful and practical. They teach me life skills, how to do certain things'.

Young people say they feel welcome in this home. Two young people who recently moved in supported this view. Both new residents say they received children's guides and are aware of processes in the placement. Another young person says, 'I arrived in an emergency, the staff were lovely'.

Young people make considerable progress at this home. There is a range of successes for young people, depending on their starting points. For some young people understanding the importance of taking responsibility for health needs and attending a doctor's appointment is a massive step forwards. Improved attendance in education, not offending, reducing substance misuse and engaging with services are all signs of positive progress for young people.

The home continues to provide exceptional quality of care to extremely complex young people and through very clear and consistent boundaries, the staff team allow them to settle, accept consequences, take responsibility and begin to make progress. Young people say they are becoming more mature, are given positive role models, are building relationships with staff, are pleased to return here, feel supported with getting to school, feel safe and protected and are given opportunities. One young person says, 'My family can visit here. Give this place a good mark because they are good'.

Staff support young people to understand and develop their identity, cultural needs and personal links. For example, dietary needs and arrangements to take young people for religious observance. Family contact is promoted and supervised in line with placing authority care plans.

Staff maintain links with young people when they move on from the home. One young person now works for the organisation and others call or visit for support. Staff describe feeling like extended family and are happy to fulfil this role. Feedback forms from previous residents reflect their positive experience. For example, young people describe being made a better person, experiencing amazing interactions and understanding how to self-control and understand others.

Parents and professionals feel young people benefit from the effective networks developed by staff to ensure their needs. Partnership working is exceptional with professionals commenting on excellent risk assessments, good responses, very high standards of care, amazing progress for young people, effective communication, collaborative working and positive mentoring roles.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The children's home provides help and protection that meet the requirements for good.</p> <p>Young people live in a safe environment. They all say that they feel safe living at the home and even when other young people may be presenting challenges to staff they feel confident staff can deal with this and keep them safe. For example a young person says, 'Staff are in control, I feel safe, staff have had restraint training, I never feel bullied'.</p> <p>There is a good network between this home and the placing authorities and professionals working with young people. This helps keep young people safe as communication is frequent and staff become aware of issues and can take proactive responses with young people. All agencies and parents contacted described regular and effective contact with the home to promote care planning and risk assessments.</p> <p>Young people know who their key workers are and know how to seek out support if needed. The majority of young people felt they could identify a trusted adult who they could talk to about any concerns and staff would listen seriously. For example, one young person says, 'I have been to young people's meetings, I feel I could say things if I wanted'. Another young person says that they complain but nothing happens so there is no point. Evidence seen during the inspection confirms that complaints are responded to promptly.</p> <p>Staff and managers demonstrate an excellent understanding of the risks associated with each young person. It is evident that staff know the young people extremely well and individual risks they present. Clear plans help to reduce the risk of harm and are further minimised by the work staff undertake with young people. Staff try not to criminalise behaviour if possible. There is appropriate use of the community police team, who show their presence at the home on regular occasions. This develops relationships, allows for open discussions and warnings where risky behaviours may be building. The local police officer visited during the inspection and gave highly positive feedback for this home. He described talking with young people on occasions as a preventative measure and informed that two police officers with a specialist knowledge of gang work plan to talk to the young people soon.</p> <p>Staff deal appropriately with any unauthorised absences. Incidents are well recorded and reported. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of absences involving a few young people. Many absences tend to be young people returning late to the home, which does significantly inflate statistics. However, staff and managers retain clear processes and emphasise to young people their</p>	

vulnerability if staff do not know their whereabouts. Missing has reduced since certain young people moved on. The home chases placing authorities to offer independent interviews when young people return, however these do not always routinely take place despite good challenge from the home.

This home asks relevant questions at admission to ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place from the beginning of placements, which helps, keep young people safe. Staff update risk assessments quickly as they get to know behaviours and they also allow young people to take appropriate risks such as travelling and going out in the community. The ethos of this home supports anti-discriminatory behaviours and teaches young people to treat others with respect. No young people reported feeling bullied or targeted in any way.

Young people described targets, which are specific to individual needs and behaviours. One of the strengths of this home is the consistency of staff with boundaries and their ability to develop effective responses as a team. Positive behaviours gain rewards and are consistently promoted. Staff maintain boundaries and work extremely well together on this. As a result, restraint is rarely used and conflict is minimal. Staff consistently re-visit background information to help understand behaviours and manage conflict with skill, tolerance and absolute calmness.

This home respects privacy for young people. There is understanding with young people about the difference between room searches and support to help young people maintain hygiene and clean rooms. This home practices what good parents would do to ensure more complex behaviours do not affect young people's health and well-being. Young people report feeling respect from the staff and appreciate the support of a cleaner who facilitates and encourages them to keep their private space hygienic.

All staff receive safeguarding training on induction. This is refreshed annually and all staff spoken to felt confident about reporting any safeguarding concerns. In addition staff recently received training on child sexual exploitation and there is planned training on radicalisation and gang association for 2016.

Robust staff recruitment processes are in place. This protects young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home.

Adequate precautions prevent the risk of fires. Safety equipment is in place and there is evidence of regular and compliant checks and fire drills.

The physical environment is safe and secure. Some small issues of improvement pointed out on inspection are in progress. The home took delivery of two new dining chairs during inspection and a recommendation is made in respect of some other minor improvements required.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is outstanding. The Registered Manager is a qualified social worker with many years of experience in childcare practice. He is suitably experienced, enrolled on the level five diploma in leadership and management and aware of the timeframe within which this needs to be completed. Staff reflect the diversity of young people and many have worked at the home long-term. Most staff have level three qualifications. Those that do not gain places on courses during their first year of employment. A commissioning officer states the home 'have a consistent staff team who work effectively with young people'.</p> <p>There is good management oversight of the service. The quality of care review undertaken by leaders and managers is improving with support. Feedback from young people, staff and professionals informs this process. It is becoming more evaluative and analytical. This shows that leaders can take on board advice and actively seeks feedback to help it improve practice. The home embraces learning from others to improve services. All feedback informs the home's annual development plan.</p> <p>An independent visitor regularly monitors what goes on in the home and reports directly to Ofsted in a timely manner. These reports are detailed but need to be more challenging in order to ensure the home maintains its high standards.</p> <p>Leaders and managers ensure care plans for young people address their individual needs and experiences. The Registered Manager attends all reviews and staff help young people prepare for this process. Challenge to placing authorities supports what is in young people's best interests. For example where young people are not making progress, managers step in to ensure a review of the care plan.</p> <p>There is excellent evidence of good working relationships with other professionals who gave complimentary feedback without exception. For example, one commissioner says, 'I have been commending the home for quite a while; it is one of very high standards'.</p> <p>The Registered Manager and staff team work well with the community and get involved in local events, for example young people are doing a Christmas jumper event to support a local charity and during the summer they are encouraged to go to local fetes and events in the community.</p> <p>Staff feel well supported to undertake their jobs confidently. Managers work closely with the team, know the children well and can support staff members directly in</p>	

their practice. Regular team meetings and supervision sessions support the work with young people and clear records show action plans and discussions. Staff receive an annual appraisal, which reviews their development and addresses any areas of concern in practice.

Training supports staff to keep abreast of new issues or refreshes areas of work, which need regular and careful monitoring. Staff appreciate up to date training on issues such as child sexual exploitation. Leaders and manager keep track of essential training with a training matrix to ensure basic training occurs regularly.

A key area of this home's success is a very effective matching and admissions process. This ensures child centred decisions are made which take into account the needs of all the young people living at the home. Commissioning officers praise this practice. For example one says, 'The service director knows every child, risk assessment is quick and gives reasoned responses. The quality for us is the matching process, they will tell us if a placement is suitable or not'. Another says they have asked the managers to offer consultancy to other providers, to create better partnership working.

Well-maintained files provide an accurate record of residents' time in the home. They demonstrate the difference the home makes to young people's lives. Life story books capture the time young people spend and give a clear record of the experiences and work undertaken while living here.

The home's statement of purpose is clear, informative and recently updated. Young people receive a version of this in a guide to the home so they know what to expect when they move in.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015