

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/01/2017
Unique reference number	1235384
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	New Horizons (NW) Limited
Registered provider address	Horizons House, 52 Bath Street, Southport, Merseyside PR9 0DH

Responsible individual	Victoria Wilden
Registered manager	Paula Jennings
Inspector	Marina Tully

Inspection date	23/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	First inspection
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make noticeable progress from their starting points.
- Staff understand young people's needs and vulnerabilities, and are guided by detailed placement plans and risk assessments in supporting young people.
- Young people benefit from the staff's partnership working with other professionals, which results in improved outcomes.
- Young people are involved in developing their care plans and daily routines. Staff also support them to participate in important meetings, such as their care plan reviews. This ensures that young people's views are influencing decisions about the futures.
- Staff work hard at building trusting relationships with young people. This is helping young people to consider how their harmful behaviour affects themselves and others. As these relationships develop, the home is becoming a safer environment.
- Young people and staff benefit from the home being managed by an experienced and suitably qualified registered manager. She is aware of the home's strengths, recognises weaknesses and takes action to improve the service.

■ Areas for improvement include:

- Some safeguarding practice is not yet good, because not all staff have followed the home's drugs policy and the registered manager has not kept Ofsted informed of all serious safeguarding concerns.
- Young people's education, health and social development can be further enhanced through a more proactive and creative approach to care planning.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the help and protection standard, the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2)(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</p> <p>In particular, that staff know, understand and apply the home's drugs policy.</p>	24/02/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure they notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; and, there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(4)(a)(c))</p>	24/02/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that when a child who is not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, that the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- Ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are adequately met.

In particular, adopt a proactive approach to sexual health, ensuring that each child attends all their health appointments. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to two children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>This is the home's first inspection since it opened in August 2016. One young person is currently living at the home and has been living there for only a very short period. While there is evidence of him making progress from his starting point, it is early days, and the extent of his progress and experiences can only truly be tested by time.</p> <p>The members of staff spoken to demonstrate aspirations for young people to achieve and progress. Barriers to education, such as permanent exclusion and a long history of non-school attendance, are a challenge and they are wholly recognised by the team. Staff's partnership working with the education department and in-house tutor is helping one young person to re-engage with their education and learning. As a result, the young person is making progress relative to their starting point when they first came to live at the home. Educational progress would improve further if the young people were provided with a timetable of structured activities while absent from school. This would support them to regain confidence in their education and prepare them for the full-time school day routine.</p> <p>When young people move into the home, staff swiftly register them with all primary healthcare services, such as the general practitioner, dentist and optician.</p>	

In the main, health needs are appropriately assessed and strategies for meeting health needs are clearly identified. When young people's emotional well-being is a concern, referrals are made to specialist services, including child and adolescent mental health services. Nevertheless, young people often refuse to attend their health appointments, despite staff's support. Furthermore, health plans neither assess young people's sexual health clearly nor identify strategies for supporting them with such matters. A more proactive and creative approach to young people's health plans would further enhance their health and well-being.

Staff are working hard to develop positive relationships with young people. The current young person likes the staff and states that he gets along with most of the team. Some positive interactions between the young person and staff were observed, including preparing food together in the kitchen. Staff have regular key-work sessions with young people, and this is helping to establish trusting relationships. This was evident in the key-work records that document the young person opening up to a member of staff about his past life experiences. Although it is still early days, this young person is starting to build positive relationships with his carers.

Staff support young people to have their say. This is particularly evident in the planning and reviewing of young people's care arrangements. Staff helped the current young person to prepare for his care plan review, which enabled him to participate in this meeting successfully. The independent review officer was complimentary about how the young person engages and articulates his views at care review meetings.

Staff support young people to keep in touch with their families and friends by taking them to visit, and supervising contact when necessary. This is helping young people to maintain strong attachments with significant people and maintain their individual identity. Staff can further enhance young people's social development by providing them with a wider range of opportunities to mix with their peers in community-based activities. Not only would this provide young people with the opportunity to develop new skills and interests, but it would help to deter them from engaging in harmful behaviour and activities.

The house is homely and maintained to a good standard. This shows young people that they are valued, and helps them to settle and feel at home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Some elements of safeguarding practice are effective. For example, detailed risk assessments provide a clear overview of the young person's vulnerabilities, as well as identifying risk management strategies to guide staff responses. Robust, safe	

recruitment practice is ensuring that all staff are suitably vetted prior to working in the home.

When young people go missing from home, staff report them to the police to ensure that they are quickly located and returned. Incidents of going missing have decreased significantly for the young person currently living at the home. This is largely down to the high level of staff supervision and the home's rural location. However, some safeguarding professionals commented that staff could be more proactive in preventing young people from going missing, for example by following them more closely when they leave the home. This was in respect of a young person who was moved out of the home due to serious safeguarding concerns, which involved going missing from home frequently and exposure to child sexual exploitation when away.

The currently placed young person's safety is well supported due to a high level of staff supervision in the home and when out in the community. Furthermore, as his relationships with staff develop, the young person's behaviour is steadily improving. The noticeable reduction in the number of occasions that staff have needed to use physical restraint as a safeguarding measure confirms this. All restraints are appropriately recorded, and the young person and member of staff involved are always debriefed. This provides opportunities for the registered manager to review the effectiveness of the method used and identify any emerging patterns or concerns. Furthermore, it helps the young person to reflect on their behaviour and raise any uncertainties or worries about staff's practice.

Staff work in close partnership with other safeguarding agencies, including the police, child exploitation teams and social workers. They attend multi-agency strategy meetings to share information, evaluate risk and plan intervention. However, the manager has not always notified Ofsted of all serious safeguarding concerns, in particular child sexual exploitation and an allegation made against a member of staff. This has prevented the regulating body from evaluating the home's safeguarding practice.

Staff have not always followed the home's drugs policy and procedures, in particular on the disposal of illegal substances found at the home. This does not demonstrate that all staff are familiar with and working in line with the home's protection policies.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager runs the home. She has a good understanding of the home's strengths and is aware of the areas that need to improve. She is the registered manager for two children's homes of this company.	

However, she has recognised the challenges that managing two services can bring and has resigned from the other service. She will continue to manage only this home, and has the support of an experienced deputy manager.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff and is able to provide consistent support and supervision to young people. When necessary, staff numbers are increased to ensure that young people's needs are appropriately met. The staff team is stable, and any gaps in the rota are filled with regular agency workers or staff from the sister home. This supports continuity in care and helps young people to build and maintain relationships with their carers.

The manager has a clear workforce development plan in place. The majority of staff have completed the core training, which includes safeguarding and behaviour management. Furthermore, all staff have or are working towards the relevant professional qualification in children's residential care. Consequently, a suitably trained and experienced team is caring for young people.

Staff report feeling well supported by the registered manager. They attend regular professional supervision and team meetings. This provides them with opportunities to reflect on their practice, discuss young people's care and identify any training needs. This effective staff support is reflected in the stability of the team.

The home's statement of purpose provides an accurate overview of the service, outlining its aims and objectives and details of the team. This document has been appropriately translated into a young person's guide, and this clearly outlines their rights, expectations and who they can contact for additional support, and includes Ofsted's details. Consequently, young people, parents, social workers and commissioners have clear expectations from the very start of what the service can provide.

Regular service monitoring is ensuring that areas that require attention are identified quickly and addressed so the service continuously improves.

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 children looked after 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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