

SC007284

Registered provider: Horizon Residential Children's Home

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Event: 10027016

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers are inspirational, passionate and forward-thinking. Monitoring is regular and robust.

- Leaders and managers are reflective and open in their responses to new ideas to improve practice. Established relationships with partner agencies enable excellent collaborative working to achieve positive outcomes for young people.
- Staff are committed to improving the lives of young people. They are supported well by regular supervision and access to high-quality training.
- Young people with complex needs make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- The ethos of the home offers young people strong guidance and direction through an effective balance of boundaries, nurture and love. Young people learn right from wrong. They build trust and learn responsibility through reparation rather than through criminalisation.
- Leaders, managers and staff recognise each young person’s potential and have high aspirations for them. They persevere with this approach even when young people present barriers and lack motivation.
- Leaders, managers and staff place a high priority on keeping young people safe. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well with professionals and families to ensure a well-coordinated approach.
- Staff build strong relationships with young people. They offer excellent incentives through a reward system, praising positive behaviour and encouraging engagement.
- Leaders, managers and staff value and respect young people. They recognise and celebrate difference and place strong emphasis on young people’s identity and culture, ensuring that diversity needs are met.

The children’s home’s area for development:

- Managers failed to update the regulator following the closure of a safeguarding investigation involving a young person. This is a minor breach of regulation and there was no impact on young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/12/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child— (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry). (Regulation 40(4)(d)(ii))	30/12/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive an exceptional level of individualised care, which helps them to feel valued and cared for. For example, staff recognise young people's strengths and encourage them to believe in themselves. Staff have high aspirations for the young people, even when their behaviours and presentation are complex and challenging. Staff strive to form relationships and build trust. This helps young people to feel that staff care for them and want them to succeed. Staff persevere with young people, for example by waking them up to ensure that they go to their educational arrangements even when they do not want to engage.

Managers and staff have established excellent relationships with commissioners, partners and other professionals. Several professionals stated that this home was their 'preferred provider' and that the relationships were 'professional' and 'flexible'. The ethos of relationship-based social work extends to the work with the young people and their parents and carers. Staff focus on treating young people with respect by including them in developing their plans. This all helps to establish trusting working relationships from which to support and help young people. Young people made comments such as 'I can talk to staff,' and '[staff member] explained well, I can get it,' and 'They trust me; it feels good.'

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting points. The careful work of the staff team builds up trust and helps young people to believe that they can do things, make progress and change their situations. This excellent progress is often despite young people having very complex needs. There are many examples of this, such as increasing school attendance from 6% to 85%, winning awards for progress in education, returning to mainstream school, completing youth offending orders and staying out of trouble and not going missing from the home. Most of the young people recently attended an activity break and they said that this has helped them to bond and build up relationships with each other and with staff.

Staff and managers understand the importance of listening to and acting on young people's views about the service. There are regular residents' meetings at which issues about the home are openly discussed and young people's views are sought. Young people said that they can raise issues that they are unhappy about and that something is done about them. The registered manager operates a 'grumbles book' in which young people can write their concerns. Clear responses are provided by staff and agreed outcomes are recorded, with comments from the young person concerned. Young people said that they felt included in the recent refurbishment of the home. Generally, they like it; they appreciate being able to choose the colours in their rooms and they feel proud of their home. All of the young people know how to complain; they know how to get a complaints form and fill it in, they can go to their social workers or, in one young person's words, go to the boss, the responsible individual.

Young people have day-to-day experiences that reflect family living within a group living

environment. Young people all enjoy positive relationships with one another. Staff offer outstanding role models for young people and the ethos and values within the home are of tolerance, inclusion and aspiration. Young people have excellent support. Staff are interested in them and encourage them to do homework, to get involved in after-school clubs and engage in chores and the general running of the home. Negative behaviours are quickly responded to. Young people have firm and fair boundaries. There are few incidents, and the police are rarely called to the home. When they are, staff work with the police, family, social worker and the young person to help them to understand inappropriate behaviours. The staff work towards reparation and behaviour management agreements. This encourages young people to take responsibility for behaviour and gives them the opportunity to change.

Staff encourage young people to take care of themselves. They are offered support to learn to be independent. Leaders and managers advocate for young people to take responsibility and to build up trust through incentives and rewards. This helps them to learn to manage themselves within the home and the community, such as how to travel independently and to be trusted to return home when expected. Young people learn to cook, wash up, do their own laundry and clean their rooms.

The home has an excellent record of returning young people to the care of their families. Since the last inspection, two young people have returned home to the care of their parents and another is currently on a reunification plan. When young people cannot return home, work is undertaken to improve their relationships with birth families and relatives. Young people receive help to understand the importance of these relationships in the longer term.

The exceptional approach of the managers and staff working in this home creates sustained improvements in young people's lives, despite their challenging needs. The managers and staff team are instrumental in supporting and sustaining change, which has altered the course of young people's lives towards positive outcomes and improved life chances.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Leaders, managers and staff place a high priority on keeping young people safe. This is evident from the outset in matching assessments, clear planning and risk evaluation both prior to, and at the point of, making a placement. This thorough approach continues through the placement care plan and risk assessment. Regular reviews of risk assessments identify progress or the emergence of risk-taking behaviours. This enables staff to promote trust or to establish safety planning quickly. All risk assessments include risk reduction strategies and a behaviour support plan.

The staff and managers' response to children who go missing is excellent. In addition to undertaking basic risk assessments, leaders and managers have devised a risk assessment tool to establish specific risks of sexual exploitation. This model of risk assessment is also applied to other areas of need, such as education, and offers an accessible document that helps staff to understand presenting risks in specific areas. A

commissioner said that this provider works well with gang-affiliated young people and those getting involved in drug-running activity. One young person has reduced his episodes of going missing by 100% since living at this home. The social worker said, 'They have been fantastic, had a massive impact on this young person; the placement is extraordinary, a very protective factor.'

Staff have excellent training and a good understanding of the risks in the community to young people. The training supports them to help young people to understand the risks from sexual exploitation, gang association, radicalisation and other forms of exploitation. Training needs are targeted and relevant to the young people in the home. As well as understanding the pull factors for young people to the community, staff ensure a positive home environment, where relationships are key to engagement and help to prevent young people from wanting to go missing.

Staff are highly experienced and manage situations and behaviours with skill and care. They provide clear, consistent boundaries about expectations of behaviour and explain these well to young people. Young people understand the boundaries of the home and respect the staff. Incidents are minimal and staff manage them effectively. Appropriate notifications are made to the regulator, which allows further oversight of behaviour management at the home. Notifications show that staff have thought fully about the reasons behind young people's behaviours and looked to manage and change this behaviour without condoning or condemning the young person. Appropriate reparative work is agreed and preventative work includes building young people's self-esteem and confidence. These actions all help young people to take responsibility without making them feel blamed or gaining a criminal record.

Leaders, managers and staff are aware of their duty to safeguard and protect young people. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work collaboratively with partner agencies to fulfil these. Notifications are minimal and appropriate. Excellent and clear records show that proper processes are followed. However, in one case the regulator was not updated when a child protection enquiry involving a child was closed.

Managers ensure that safe recruitment checks are undertaken when employing new staff members. Managers verify references and ensure that all basic checks are completed before new staff start work. Leaders and managers support an excellent induction, which includes trial shifts, two weeks' mentoring and questionnaires on the staff's understanding of practice. These all help to ensure that unsuitable adults do not gain access to work at the home or have unsupervised contact with the young people.

Young people and staff recently went to stay at an outdoor activity centre where they learned how to work as a team, creating and finding solutions. This course has helped young people to understand and assess risk and learn skills that will help them with problem solving.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are passionate about the service they provide. They have an ambitious vision for the young people they care for and high expectations that they can achieve great things. Leaders and managers convey this vision to young people and their professional networks. They offer highly individualised care, understanding that all young people's needs are different and therefore a variety of approaches are needed. This attitude encourages the participation and engagement of young people and makes them feel valued.

Leaders and managers know the children and their care plans well. Although they do not always get involved in direct work, they regularly audit case files and they are involved closely with staff in supervision, team meetings and training. They have regular contact with young people and are present and accessible within the home. Observations throughout this inspection evidenced positive and warm relationships between leaders and managers and young people.

Staff state that the support from managers is exceptional. Induction, training, appraisal and development are of an extremely high level. This has enabled an experienced staff team to feel valued and supported and consequently to remain working at the home. The established and experienced staff team works consistently well together, which helps to support the individual needs of the young people. Staff feel that leaders and managers listen to them and take their suggestions seriously. One staff member said, 'It's great to feel appreciated and have your ideas valued.'

Leaders and managers know the service's strengths and weaknesses well and put action plans into place. They learn from inspections, training and consultancy work. There are effective monitoring systems and an action plan to improve monitoring and the service as a whole.

An excellent feature of this home is the ability of the manager and staff to work in partnership with other professionals. They are a leading service working with young people with complex needs and a preferred service for many London boroughs. Established and well-preserved relationships exist that help young people to make progress, get into schools and pupil referral units quickly and promote care plans. These positive relationships do not, however, deter leaders and managers from challenging when necessary, which, in several examples seen during this inspection, has helped to promote young people's progress.

Leaders and managers promote tolerance. This is seen in the approach to incidents and reparation. There is good attention to the identity and diversity needs of young people through the children-led diversity assessment of needs. This assessment is completed on admission and considers diversity needs such as culture, dietary, religious, language and identity needs. This approach shows young people that their backgrounds are respected and that they are taken into account in care planning.

Leaders and managers build excellent relationships with partners, parents, professionals

and young people. They seek close relationships with parents when the placing authority has agreed that this is appropriate. They work continuously to include parents, helping them to take responsibility for their children and work with the home to facilitate positive returns to their care or to improve relationships. Parents give positive feedback about the improvements that they see in the behaviour of their children and appreciate being included as partners as opposed to feeling excluded.

Leaders and managers work closely with placing authorities and have very positive and established relationships, built over a number of years. They are not afraid to turn inappropriate referrals away and are clear about their reasons for doing so. Leaders and managers offer good challenge to placing authorities when they believe that young people have made sufficient progress to warrant a change to the care plan. Examples include promoting independent travel for a young person who had had a history of going missing from care, and promoting more contact for a young person who had worked hard to change behaviours that were problematic for younger brothers and sisters.

Leaders and managers use team meetings to share learning about theories and to understand how research can affect practice. Recent topics discussed have been attunement and attachment theory and managing difficult behaviours. This approach to continuous learning enables staff to feel valued and promotes their understanding of young people's behaviours.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC007284

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Residential Children's Home

Registered provider address: 46 The Ridgeway, North Harrow, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 7QN

Responsible individual: Mehnaaz Chaudhary

Registered manager: St Simmons Muhammad

Inspector

Christine Kennet, social care inspector

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