

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>11/08/2015</b>                                                                                             |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC008600</b>                                                                                               |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                                                                   |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd</b>                                                                           |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd,<br/>5 Bramhall Park Road,<br/>Bramhall, STOCKPORT,<br/>Cheshire, SK7 3DQ</b> |

|                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Miss Bharati Parikh</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Miss Maria Simmons</b>  |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Stella Lovie</b>        |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>11/08/2015</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained Effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                    |

## SC008600

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people benefit from a stable and experienced staff group who demonstrate a commitment to meeting their needs and keeping them safe. As a result, young people make good progress relative to their individual circumstances and their time living at the home.
- Young people report that they feel very comfortable in the home and get on well with staff. They view them as role models and this helps them to change their outlook on life.
- Young people feel that their lives have improved since they have been at the home and they say they feel safe here.
- Positive and proactive working together with partner agencies ensures that young people get the services that they need and are appropriately safeguarded.
- Young people are well prepared for their futures and transitions to new placements are effectively managed.
- Staff and young people are very well supported by a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager who is very visible and maintains close oversight of the quality of care to ensure that that young people's outcomes improve. She can demonstrate the positive impact her service has had on young people's lives.
- The one requirement and two recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. One further requirement is made to ensure that all staff receive training in the management of sexually harmful behaviour. Two recommendations to further improve practice are also made. These are relatively minor shortfalls that do not impact adversely on young people's safety or welfare.

## 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 with the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Due date   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 33: Employment of staff: The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development; with specific regard to training in the management of sexually harmful behaviour. (Regulation 33 (4) (a)) | 11/10/2015 |

### Recommendations

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

Homes should take account of information provided by independent return home interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, 9.30)

Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child; with specific reference to more description in the restraint records about de-escalation techniques used. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations 14.4)

### Full report

#### Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 09/02/2015      | CH - Interim    | sustained effectiveness |
| 16/07/2014      | CH - Full       | Adequate                |
| 08/01/2014      | CH - Interim    | Good Progress           |

## Inspection Judgements

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>Staff work effectively with placing authorities and families to promote the personal growth and development of each young person. This is achieved through highly constructive relationships between staff and young people in conjunction with careful and considered target setting and incentives. Placement plans are appropriately detailed and focussed so that attention is paid to each individual young person's needs and their journey. As one external professional commented: 'It is apparent from the young person's relationships with staff that he has developed social skills which will promote his further development in his life choices. He has been supported to develop his understanding of appropriate relationships and acceptable behaviours. This has been through a clear, consistent routine and expectations. I believe staff have been honest with him in respect of what challenges are ahead for him through this period.'</p> <p>Staff work in a non-judgemental way ensuring young people are respected as individuals. They are adept at helping young people to feel good about themselves, accepting and valuing them for who they are. This reinforces a positive sense of identity in individual young people and tolerance within the wider group. Staff are proactive in promoting social inclusion and non-discriminatory behaviour and attitudes among the young people using media, sport and specifically themed sessions to raise young people's awareness of the diverse society they live within. This helps to counter the isolation of individuals by others and nurtures friendships between young people.</p> <p>Staff are persistent in their efforts to promote positive outcomes for even the most challenging young people. Young people's care is regularly reviewed to ensure their current and emerging needs can be met. If this is not the case, the manager will ensure concerns are raised in order to review the placement and find suitable</p> |                 |

alternatives if in the best interest of young people. Staff are resilient and show a great deal of perseverance when managing young people's challenging and sometimes confrontational behaviour. They provide positive role modelling and guidance through continuity of relationships and consistent nurturing care. They are attentive to young people's emotional, mental and physical health needs, including repairing earlier damage to self-esteem and encouraging friendships and familial relationships. Where appropriate, this involves using life story books to help young people reflect on their past. It also involves arranging access to specialist provisions such as community mental health services and drug and alcohol services. This allows helpful guidance and support to be provided when young people are most in need. Unfortunately, not all young people avail themselves of these opportunities despite considerable encouragement from staff.

Young people are encouraged to think seriously about their health in a holistic way, paying attention to the quality of their diet, their habits (including smoking) and their general fitness. Each young person is encouraged to make their own choices and decisions about their health, treatment and lifestyle, and encouraged to maintain good personal hygiene. Placement plans detail historic, current and any known future healthcare interventions. This means staff have a good understanding of young people's individual healthcare needs and ensure they are met on a day-to-day basis. As one social worker confirmed: 'My young person is supported with health appointments to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff pass on health and lifestyle advice in an age-appropriate manner. The young person is discouraged from smoking and a healthy balanced diet is provided.'

Young people feel that their lives have seen improvement during their time at the home. This is because they enjoy mostly settled placements and receive highly individualised quality support from staff. They felt listened to and understood by staff. There seems to be a genuine quality in the exchanges that young people really valued. As one young person recently confirmed to staff in a thank you letter: 'In my time here you have dealt with my behaviours very well and started with getting me weekly contact. You have helped me to get my GCSEs and given me the opportunity to get a job. I no longer take drugs. I have GCSEs and have myself a job. So I would like to thank you so much for everything you have done for me. You have changed my life and I cannot thank you enough.'

Staff are very proactive in ensuring that young people have access to appropriate educational provision. This includes effective in-house education from a tutor who is suitably qualified. He ensures that young people have good baseline educational assessments so that their progress can be measured in a meaningful way. Staff have been particularly successful in pushing for some young people to go to school or college in the community rather than just attend the in-house provision. They work closely with education professionals to share behaviour management strategies and risk assessments so that even very challenging young people who have been out of the formal education system for a significant time are able to benefit from engagement with peers in appropriate school settings. This promotes their self-esteem and gives them greater opportunity to develop social networks.

As one social worker said about her young person: 'He is on the right track here. He will be starting school in September which is brilliant. It's been an up-hill struggle but staff have been proactive and supportive in getting this to happen.'

Individually tailored care supports and helps to prepare young people for moving onto semi-independent and fully independent living. They are encouraged and supported to aspire for the best for their future and to make good life choices and influence decisions about how they behave and what they do in their lives. The home has a semi-independent unit that is fully staffed but enables young people to experience some of the realities of looking after themselves in terms of practical skills. As one young person fed back: 'This house was a massive help to me, especially learning new skills to live alone. The staff were amazing.'

Staff provide young people with a living environment which is suited to their individual needs and reflects the high value they place upon them. The premises are maintained to a good standard. The manager has instigated a landscaping programme to make the large grounds more accessible to the young people and has provided various recreational equipment to encourage exercise and play. Young people are fully supported to participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities that promote their general development. At the point of the inspection, they were planning their summer holiday in Wales around individual young people's needs and wishes. This helps to provide young people with fun new experiences and have some positive memories of their time in the home.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>Young people are safeguarded by competent child protection practice. They say they feel safe at the home and respected by staff. Group dynamics and behaviour are managed well. This provides young people with a harmonious environment in which to live. As one young person said: 'It's as sound as a pound here. It's the bee's knees. The best care home I've ever been in and that's why I asked to come back here. Although I'm on one to one, staff give me room to breathe.'</p> <p>Staff have a calm and connected approach to young people which ensures any temporary ruptures to relationships are quickly repaired. Young people feel understood and cared about. This enables them to tolerate correction of their behaviour. As one external professional commented: 'Staff are very child centred. From my experience, issues such as risk and keeping young people safe are dealt with well. The staff are good at engaging with the young people in a relaxed manner but also impose clear and appropriate boundaries.'</p> |                 |

Staff provide young people with the care and control to which they are entitled and offer opportunities to them to relate to adults who are able to demonstrate emotional commitment combined with professional integrity and safe boundaries to behaviour. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. Staff use a hierarchy of behavioural techniques which takes into account a young person's age, understanding and the seriousness of the situation at any given point. This support enables young people to cope more constructively with their emotions. Where staff need to give additional help, their use of diversion, re-direction and de-escalation is effective. Where behaviour escalates to a level where young people become distressed and place themselves and others at risk of harm, staff are competently trained and skilled in using agreed intervention techniques. Staff keep suitable records of such intervention but sometimes fail to give enough detail about the methods they use to try to calm young people down. This means that young people may not always understand those records should they choose to view them at any stage.

Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding. All staff attend training in safeguarding at an early stage in their employment and receive regular refresher training. Consequently, staff maintain their understanding of how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to manage and report child protection concerns such as sexual exploitation and disclosures of abuse.

Staff maintain a strong focus on the protection of young people so that their safety and well-being remain central to the running of the home. Staffing ratios carefully reflect the needs of each young person. Risk assessments are thorough, insightful and individualised and address the diverse needs and personalities of the young people. Staff are skilled at discussing with young people their areas of risk, behaviour, responsibilities and how these are to be managed. They are able to successfully navigate the difficulties and dilemmas of managing high risk but they also try to help the young people develop self-management and social skills. As a result, risk-taking behaviours such as substance abuse and self-harming have significantly reduced, and most young people are actively engaged in the process of trying to make safer choices. As one young person confirmed: 'They've helped me with things like using drugs. I was in secure before coming here, and this place has got me into going to the gym, doing my anger management therapy and I haven't smoked weed for over 2 months. I'm going to be moving into a flat next month and they're helping me to get my head around all the things I need to do to live on my own. I've got a mechanical engineering apprenticeship arranged for September.' In a similar positive vein, one social worker enthused: 'My young person has made numerous positive shifts in his behaviour such as the incidence of self-harming has reduced and he is open with staff about it. I'm gob smacked! He's had his first LAC medical for three years. The partnership between the staff and him is very good. He is telling them how he feels. It's a massive step for him. He feels he can discuss control and care issues with the staff here and come to an acceptable compromise. This works for him and helps to keep him safe as he doesn't feel overwhelmed by the one to one supervision. They are very balanced in their approach.'

However, some young people still choose sometimes to go missing and accordingly place themselves at risk. When this happens, staff are very proactive in searching for them in the local area. They work closely with relevant agencies to devise risk management strategies, and the manager is assertive in calling for strategy meetings or review of young people's care plans if she feels they cannot be kept safe in the home. As local police confirmed: 'We've a good relationship with the home and feel that the staff are proactive when a young person goes missing. They follow the missing protocols and are out looking for the young person. The manager and the staff were very approachable when I've had to contact them.' The manager ensures that young people have access to independent return interviews when they come back so that young people have the chance to talk about why they have gone missing. However, the service providing this arrangement is new and does not yet share written copies or summaries of these interviews with the home, though it does give verbal feedback. This somewhat inhibits the home from having a full picture about the push-pull factors and incorporating them into individual young people's risk management strategies.

Staff report that there is an open culture within the home and they feel able to raise issues and speak freely. They present as a qualified, experienced and stable staff group capable of diverting individual young people away from risky behaviour. They feel in control and supported by each other which positively reinforces a healthy living group climate. All child protection concerns are immediately shared with relevant agencies so that young people are effectively safeguarded. As one local authority senior safeguarding manager commented: 'We do have contact with the home on a regular basis. They contact us both about allegations and if they have any other concerns. I would say that their contact is appropriate and that they try to work in partnership with us. They always appear to deal with issues by the book and they are happy to discuss issues with us.'

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Judgement grade |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>The Registered Manager is very experienced and well qualified to undertake her role. She is highly visible and has good relationships with the young people. She is clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her service, learns from monitoring and inspection activities and has action plans in place to promote continual improvement. Her monitoring of young people's progress and development is good and she receives useful quality assurance feedback from the independent visitor. This helps her to maintain a careful oversight and grip on the home. The aims of the provision are clearly stated both for parents and placing</p> |                 |

authorities, and are effectively translated into practice. Young people receive a pack which contains information relating to expectations of behaviour, their responsibilities, as well as their rights during their time in the home. This means that everyone can be clear about what to expect at the home.

The manager has sufficient control to practise with flexibility and an appropriate degree of autonomy. This has a positive impact on the care home by helping to build a sense of purpose in the role, which in turn helps to motivate people. She is well-supported by meetings with the Responsible Individual and by an independent social work consultant who provides her supervision. This helps her to reflect on bigger picture issues and problem solve.

The manager has clear, well-worked out strategies for dealing with behaviour and education. This means that staff have high morale and feel they receive clear guidance. The young people behave better as a result. She achieves a working consensus within the staff team where goals are shared and staff are equally motivated. This serves to promote better outcomes for the young people. The manager makes and sustains good relationships with placing authorities and individual social workers responsible for young people living at the home. She understands the plans for the young people and actively drives the achievement of important milestones and goals and permanence for young people's futures. She makes make child-centred decisions about admissions. Priority is given to the safety and stability of the group environment and new admissions take account of all the young people's needs and the likely impact of new young people joining the group.

Staff receive good quality support from their manager which enables them to provide a positive caring environment for young people. Regular formal supervision and appraisal provides the opportunity for staff to discuss their work and the care and well-being of young people. They confirm that they also have access to informal support from managers when they need it. Staff benefit from a wide range of training. The training programme is designed and organised to meet the on-going learning needs of the staff group, and to understand specific needs of particular young people living in the home. For example, staff report that they found recent training in respect of legal highs very useful. However, staff have not had training in the management of sexually harmful behaviour. This is a shortfall as they need to understand the theory and risk management approaches associated with such behaviour to be as competent as possible in the management of some of the young people they offer placements to.

The manager ensures Ofsted and other relevant agencies are informed when serious events occur such as young people involved in self-harming or placing themselves at significant risk by frequent running away. This enables effective oversight and monitoring by the regulator as well as ensuring those people with and interest in the safety and welfare of young people are informed to enable them to provide intervention and support as required. She is appropriately assertive with partner agencies in making sure that young people receive the

services they need. She is also proactive in calling for review of young people's care plans when she considers that the home is not able to meet their needs. This serves to promote young people's welfare and safety.

## 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*.

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