

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC008600
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd
Registered provider address	New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd, 5 Bramhall Park Road, Bramhall, STOCKPORT, Cheshire SK7 3DQ

Responsible individual	Bharati Parikh
Registered manager	Maria Simmons
Inspector	Paul Scott

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to benefit from the care and support that they receive from a largely experienced and well-established staff team. Their relationships with staff are extremely positive and form a good foundation for care. Staff use these relationships to encourage and support young people to engage in the positive aspects of life such as education and constructive recreational activities. All young people are making some form of progress relative to their personal circumstances and time in placement. A number of young people expressed satisfaction with the support they receive from staff, and confirm that it is mostly a good place to live. This is a view shared by stakeholders whose views were ascertained during this inspection. One social worker said, ‘The staff have been really good in supporting (name’s) long-term plan. They manage his behaviours and risk well, and show lots of empathy and a really good insight into the way he is. They have stepped up when necessary and (name) wants to stay here until he can return home.’ One young person has recently been admitted to the home. Some level of planning went into this and the young person appears to be well-matched and settling into the current group of young people. Staff are still getting to know the young person and are gathering pertinent information that will be used to inform his individual care plan and risk assessment. One young person has left the home since the last inspection after the manager served notice on their placement. This was following a particularly challenging period that resulted in a placement breakdown. During this period there was an increase in risk-taking behaviour, in particular missing-from-home and cannabis-related incidents, all of which were managed effectively through a multi-agency response. Staff made every effort to re-engage the young person. They offered support and encouragement for him to make positive life choices which the young person chose to ignore, intent on moving to semi-independent living. Progress in addressing the requirements and recommendations from the previous	

inspection are mixed. When documents are updated on the computer, this information is now routinely transferred to the young person's files. These files are the primary source of reference for staff, which ensures that their approach to meeting young people's needs is based on current and up-to-date information.

Risk assessments have been reviewed and updated, and now accurately reflect each young person's level of risk. Staff are consistent in the implementation of identified strategies and manage effectively each young person's behaviour, risks and vulnerabilities. Most young people come to the home with established risk-taking behaviours including criminal activity, sexually harmful behaviour, self-harm, going missing, and alcohol and substance misuse. Over time these types of behaviour have reduced for the majority of young people. This is because staff make every effort to help young people understand the consequences of putting themselves at unnecessary risk, and where necessary refer them to specialist agencies, such as substance misuse services.

Records of sanctions have improved and now include evidence that the young person has been spoken to about the consequence. Also, the manager is adding her comments regarding the effectiveness of the sanction, although these would benefit from a greater analysis of the impact of repeated sanctions, for example supervised spends.

A large majority of staff have completed or refreshed their behaviour management training including the use of physical restraint. There have not been any incidents of this type since the last inspection. Clear direction to not use physical intervention has been issued to the two relief staff who have yet to complete the training. Online basic training on the management of self-harm has been completed. This ensures that staff have some awareness of how to respond to and support young people who present this type of behaviour. Again, there have not been any incidents of this type since the last inspection.

A number of improvements have been made to the physical environment. The general décor has been freshened up and young people's bedrooms have been redecorated. Young people have caused damage to some areas and there are a number of outstanding repairs, some of which have been outstanding for an unreasonable amount of time. For example, damage to one young person's wardrobe door was reported in the home's maintenance log on 9 January 2017 and as yet has not been replaced. Also, not all damage is being recorded in the home's maintenance log. The manager was unable to provide written evidence that the significant plaster damage in one young person's bedroom had been reported and that action was being taken to address this, although she stated that it had been verbally reported when it occurred two weeks previously.

Some improvement is noted in the monthly reports completed by the independent visitor. The gathering and representation of the views of professionals has improved, but this has not been consistent for the visits completed since that last inspection. Positively, the responsible individual has taken decisive action in this

respect and has recently appointed a different independent visitor. However, given that they have only undertaken one visit, and have not yet submitted their report to Ofsted, it is difficult to assess whether this will fully address the requirement from the last inspection, which is repeated.

There is still no formal time-scaled policy for challenging the underperformance of those required to provide services for young people. While this has not been an issue since the last inspection, the need for this process continues to exist.

Information about this children's home

This is a one of a number of privately run children's homes. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2016	Full	Good
24/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/08/2015	Full	Good
09/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. This is with specific reference to improving the level of consultation with children, parents and professionals. (Regulation 44(2)(a))	25/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that a homely environment is maintained throughout the house by completing any outstanding repairs, and making sure that any future damage is reported via the home's maintenance reporting system, and that these repairs are completed in a timely manner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Formalise the procedure for challenging the placing authority, or any other relevant person, when they do not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home, or in preparation for leaving the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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