

SC008600

Registered provider: New Horizons (Stockport) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2008.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 August 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 24 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

During a full inspection on 24 and 25 April 2023, the home was judged as inadequate. Due to the serious shortfalls identified, compliance notices were issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

These notices were monitored on 4 July 2023. Ofsted found that the registered provider had not taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices under regulation 12 and 13. Further notices were issued.

At this full inspection, sufficient progress had not been made to meet the compliance notices and a further compliance notice was issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard. Furthermore, a notice of restriction of accommodation was also issued.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2023	Full	Inadequate
27/07/2022	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Good
26/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home. Despite children living in the home for a long time, not all children have a positive experience. Two children live in the main building and one child lives in the annex. The needs of children are not effectively met. One child is isolated in a separate annex and states that they feel isolated and excluded from day-to-day interactions in the home. Leaders, managers and staff had not considered the impact this is having on the child's welfare.

Children's progress and experiences are variable. Recording is poor and does not clearly evidence each child's progress and development. This is a missed opportunity to celebrate children's achievements and their journey through care.

Not all children have meaningful relationships with staff. Children say that not all staff care about them, and staff would rather spend time on their phones. The manager was aware of this and had spoken to staff in supervision. However, this continued to happen as there was no monitoring in place. Children report that they can tell staff if they are worried about something and they felt that most staff, but not all, will listen. This means that children do not always feel listened to or valued.

Education plans are not updated and not all children have access to full-time education provision. One child has been excluded from school and completes limited online learning. There is no evidence to demonstrate the actions taken by leaders and managers to liaise with schools and virtual heads to promote children's educational outcomes.

Children are supported to attend routine health appointments. However, not all children's individual health needs have been appropriately identified or responded to. Specialist services and additional support arrangements are not consistently accessed to support each child's health and general well-being.

Children do not have access to all areas of their home. Consequences used restrict children from accessing parts of their home. On occasions, a child was prevented from entering the main home as a consequence for their behaviour. This is unacceptable practice and is segregating a child from the group without a clear rationale or consideration of the impact on the child's mental health and well-being. Furthermore, the placing social worker was not aware of this restrictive practice.

Children are supported to spend time with their families. Parents talked positively about the staff who support family time. However, when there are changes to, or concerns about, family time arrangements, these are not effectively reviewed and considered in terms of the child's views, wishes and understanding.

Children are not supported to contribute to decisions about their lives. Children are unaware of their care planning arrangements and are not encouraged or supported to access an independent advocate or contribute to their care records.

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

Safeguarding practice in this home is not sufficiently robust and does not promote the safety and welfare of the children. Staff do not always respond effectively and follow the strategies in place to help keep the children safe. In addition, strategies in place to protect and support children who display self-injurious behaviours or sexually harmful behaviours do not demonstrate that effective strategies have been carefully considered and implemented. This presents a risk to children and staff.

Leaders, managers and staff do not demonstrate an appropriate or proactive response to risk. Risks are not consistently and suitably evaluated to understand and reduce the risk of harm to children. A blanket approach to the internet, which is not permitted in the home, is used to manage risks without a clear rationale or understanding of each child's needs. In addition, risks associated with children who display self-injurious behaviours and when children go missing from care are not clearly understood by the staff team caring for them. This leaves children vulnerable to harm.

Incidents in relation to children going missing from care are not managed safely. The protocols for staff to follow are basic and do not contain detailed strategies to support children to return home safely. There was a delay in one child who has a known history of self-injurious behaviours being reported as missing from care. This is despite staff being aware that the child intended on significantly harming themselves.

Children do not benefit from meaningful or independent return home interviews, as these are completed over the telephone. Limited information is shared with managers and staff to enable them to identify patterns and triggers to children going missing. This does not support managers and staff in revising strategies to support and keep children safe.

Sleeping arrangements in the home do not ensure that children are safe overnight. Despite the organisation employing night staff, managers do not have a clear understanding or expectations of what this role should entail. There are no recordings to indicate if direct monitoring is taking place to ensure that children do not enter each other's bedrooms and potentially engage in harmful behaviour towards each other. This is despite information being available that this has potentially occurred. This is a risk for all involved.

Boundaries for children are unclear and positive behaviour is not consistently encouraged and supported. Consequences are not appropriate and relevant to behaviours shown. The use of consequences is restrictive, disproportionate and punitive. One child was banned from entering the main home for two days. This means the child was segregated from their peers. Furthermore, records and

incidents relating to behaviour management are not reviewed or evaluated, and children's views are not considered.

Physical intervention forms are not completed in line with regulation. When a child alleged that they had suffered harm during an intervention, there was no evidence to indicate that appropriate action was taken to follow up this allegation. Children are not always spoken to about the measures used, and debriefs have taken place with all staff together as a group. Debriefs have been led by a member of staff who was involved in the incident with no independent oversight. This means that unsafe care practices could continue unchecked and create a closed culture with no independent oversight.

Allegations are not explored or understood to ensure that children are safeguarded appropriately. When a child made an allegation of harm, this was not followed through or appropriately reported to relevant professionals and agencies to safeguard all involved. This is a breach of the company's own safeguarding policies and is not in line with child protection procedures.

Risk management strategies are unsafe and not all children are supported to develop skills and strategies to manage their own feelings. The strategy for one child, who threatened to use a ligature to harm themselves, is for them to go to their bedroom alone to take time out. This is neither appropriate, nurturing, nor safe care.

The environment for children is not consistently safe or maintained to a high standard. Inspectors observed significant health and safety issues in the home's cellar, which is accessible to children. The COSHH cupboard also presents a hazard because products are not labelled or identifiable. In addition, children's bedrooms are of a poor standard with broken furniture, dirty bedding and noticeable damage to walls. This does not promote a safe, nurturing environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are staffing shortfalls in the home and recruitment is ongoing. This shortfall has meant that the manager has not had appropriate support to complete relevant management tasks. This has impacted on the leadership and management oversight of the home.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that children's plans are consistently updated. Plans contain conflicting information and do not consider the information provided in the children's local authority plans. This does not ensure that staff can support children to make progress in key areas of their lives.

Leaders and managers do not consistently monitor the quality of care provided. The manager and responsible individual are not supporting the home to make progress or identifying areas of development. A vast majority of the concerns identified during this inspection were not known or considered by leaders and managers.

The strengths and weaknesses of the home are not effectively evaluated by leaders and managers. There is no evidence of learning from practice with limited review and reflection following any incidents. Consequently, children's experiences of living in the home are uncertain and progress is limited.

Staff do not benefit from appropriate supervision or probationary reviews. Supervisions are not regular or reflective and do not take place in line with the home's own policy and procedures. Supervision records emphasise that there is no learning from practice. This impacts on children's experiences and progress.

Team meetings are regular and well attended. However, records are poor and contain limited information. This does not support staff to develop in their roles or understand the quality of care being provided to children.

Training is predominantly completed online. Staff complete multiple online training courses all at the same time. There is no review or consideration as to the effectiveness of this training. There are shortfalls in needs-led training. In particular, staff have not had ligature training, which is a significant risk due to the needs of the children in their care.

Leaders and managers have not demonstrated that they have taken sufficient action to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection and requirements will therefore be restated. Due to the widespread failings, an immediate restriction of accommodation notice has been issued. Furthermore, a compliance notice has been issued under regulation 12, the protection of children standard.

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, The 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that children have access to specialist services to support their individual needs. Leaders and managers must ensure that children are supported to benefit from independent interviews following incidents of going missing from care and challenge the placing authority if these interviews are not appropriately completed. This requirement is restated.	4 October 2023
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	4 October 2023

ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that the home is appropriately used, maintained and equipped to allow all children to take part in day-to-day life in the home.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)(i)) The registered provider must ensure that children are consulted about the quality of care that they receive and encouraged to contribute to their care planning arrangements.	4 October 2023

The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(viii)) Leaders and managers must ensure that children have access to appropriate education in line with their relevant plans. Children must be supported to contribute to and understand their plans. Furthermore, when children have been excluded from school, leaders and managers must support children to access meaningful education and support them back into appropriate education.	4 October 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	4 October 2023

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that consequences issued are appropriate to the behaviour displayed, and that the use of such measures is reviewed and evaluated as to their effectiveness.	
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and	13 September 2023

are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d)(e)) This requirement is restated.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	4 October 2023

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they implement systems to review and evaluate the quality of care provided to children and demonstrate learning from practice. These reviews must be used to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge and identify how the quality of care has improved. This requirement is restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all children’s plans contain consistent information and are understood by children and those caring for them.	4 October 2023
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises— allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(iv)) In particular, children should be supported to access all areas of their home without unnecessary restriction. Children must not be restricted access to their home as a consequence of behaviour.	4 October 2023
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction.	4 October 2023

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)) Leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive supervision and probationary reviews in line with the provider’s own policies and procedures.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that when a child has been held, there is a record kept that staff have been spoken to by an authorised person about the use of the measure. Furthermore, children are spoken to about the measure used and their views are recorded. In addition to this, the use of the hold and of the imposed consequences must be evaluated for effectiveness by an authorised person.	4 October 2023

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC008600

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd

Registered provider address: 154-156 Buxton Road High Lane, Stockport,
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