

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 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: 24 and 25 April 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/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 27 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/07/2022	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Good
26/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There have been a large number of children moving in and out of the home since the last inspection. The manager completes an assessment for each child who is new to the home. However, the assessment does not identify whether the skills, experience and training that staff have can meet the child's needs effectively and how the child's known risks may affect the risks of other children currently living in the home. As a result, the progress and experiences of some children have not been positive.

The manager and staff ensure that children's health needs are met. Children are supported to attend routine appointments and to have access to necessary health services.

Children have trusting and positive relationships with staff. Children are treated with dignity and respect. Throughout the inspection, warm and nurturing relationships were observed between the children and staff. Placing authorities and parents speak positively about the home. However, a high use of agency staff reduces the consistency of care arrangements.

Staff ensure that children have good attendance in school. When one child has faced difficulties in relation to their education provider, the manager and staff have advocated on their behalf and ensured that their educational needs are being met while an alternative school is identified.

The manager and staff work with placing authorities and families to promote positive and meaningful family time in line with agreed plans. Children are also supported to spend time with friends. This means that children have age-appropriate social interactions and can build skills and strategies to form and maintain relationships and gain a sense of their own identity.

The overall judgement has been limited by the judgement given for 'How well children and young people are helped and protected'.

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

Each child's individual risks are detailed in their risk management plans. However, these are not robust documents and do not give clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow.

There have been shortfalls in staff responses when children have gone missing from the home. Staff practice is ineffective and inconsistent because they are not provided with a sufficiently clear plan with detailed strategies for them to follow. When a child is missing from the home, staff do not actively search areas where the

child is known to visit or go to addresses that are known to be a concern. Ineffective oversight from the manager has meant that staff practice is not reviewed and lessons to be learned are not identified following missing-from-home episodes. In addition to this, return home interviews are not always completed or recorded.

There have been incidents when children have been physically held. The manager has not evaluated each incident, and staff are not spoken to after the incident about the use of a hold. Children are given the opportunity for a debrief after a hold has taken place. However, these often focus on the child's behaviour and do not ensure that the child understands the reason that a hold was necessary. When consequences are imposed, their effectiveness is not always evaluated.

There are some shortfalls in recruitment processes. A full employment history is not always obtained for all staff, and when issues are raised about a person's references, there is no record of these issues being explored. Staff recruitment processes do not ensure that all staff are safe to work with children.

The children told the inspector that they like living in the home and that if they have a problem, they can talk to staff who will always help.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are gaps in the manager's overall monitoring and review systems. This does not support the manager to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. This means that ineffective staff practice goes unchallenged and unchanged. The manager has identified that due to staffing shortfalls, her time has been used to work directly with the children rather than in her role as the manager of the home.

The manager has completed a quality of care review. However, this was not sent to Ofsted within the required time frame, and the report covered a nine-month period. The report is not evaluative and does not include direct feedback from children. This means that the report is ineffective as a tool for continuous improvement.

Significant events have occurred that are not always notified to Ofsted. This is required by regulation and inhibits external monitoring of children's safety and welfare.

There is a core team of staff who are experienced and know the children well. Staff are trained in mandatory subjects. However, there are shortfalls in training specifically required to meet the children's individual needs, such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder training.

The manager and staff work proactively and positively with other agencies and professionals. They seek to build effective working relationships to secure positive outcomes for children. However, when children's plans, such as care plans, health plans and education plans, are not sent by the placing authority, the manager is not

taking appropriate action to escalate these concerns to ensure that the home has all the relevant information to care for the children.

When complaints have been raised, leaders and managers have responded swiftly and appropriately. They have ensured that thorough investigations have taken place in line with the company's complaints policy.

Following the inspection, a case review was held that determined that two compliance notices would be issued as a result of failing to meet regulations.

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 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; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff take effective action to search for children when they are missing from the home. In addition to this, the registered person must make sure there are clear missing-from-home procedures for staff to follow. These procedures must be individualised for each child.	30 June 2023
* 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—	30 June 2023

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s risk management plans are robust and contain clear guidance and strategies for staff to follow.	
* 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they review and evaluate reports of incidents, physical interventions and episodes of missing from home. These reviews must be used to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge and how quality of care has improved.	30 June 2023
* The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—	30 June 2023

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; (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff have training specifically for individual children's needs.	
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— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; 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)(v)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that when a child has been held, there is record kept showing that staff have been spoken to about the use of the measure and that children are supported to understand why a hold has been used. In addition to this, the use of the hold and of the imposed consequences must be evaluated for effectiveness.	30 June 2023

The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revisit it; and Notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revisions. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)) Specifically, this is in relation to ensuring that the statement of purpose includes the details of the staff, including details of their experience and qualifications.	30 June 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is a full employment history for each staff member and an explanation for any gaps in employment. In addition to this, the registered person must evidence that any concerns raised on references have been explored.	30 June 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— 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 (c)) Specifically, the registered person must challenge the placing authority if children's plans, such as placing authority care	30 June 2023

plans, health plans and education plans, are not received within an acceptable time frame following reviews.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	30 June 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").	30 June 2023

The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))	
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* These requirements are subject to compliance notices.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The registered person should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. A record of the return home interview should be recorded in the missing-from-home record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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) Limited

Registered provider address: 154-156 Buxton Road High Lane, Stockport,
Cheshire SK6 8EA

Responsible individual: Bharati Parikh

Registered manager: Maria Simmons

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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