

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	01/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC386837
Type of inspection	Full
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	Amie Evans
Inspector	Paul Scott

Inspection date	01/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC386837

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a caring and supportive home that is making a positive difference to their lives. The manager and staff are deeply committed to supporting young people and work hard to help them to improve their life opportunities. The effectiveness of staff's efforts is evident in the good progress that young people make in many aspects of their lives.
- Care practice is based on good assessment, planning and review. It is underpinned by strong, reciprocal relationships that nurture a sense of belonging and increased self-worth.
- Young people's safety is given a high priority. Staff have a good understanding of young people's known risks and vulnerabilities, and take the right action to manage these and any emerging safeguarding concerns.
- Links with partnership agencies are strong and have been used effectively. Staff work effectively with a range of safeguarding, education and health professionals to ensure that young people's known and emerging needs, risks and behaviours are appropriately addressed.
- Managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and demonstrate a strong commitment to an improvement agenda. They show good learning from previous experiences, including Ofsted inspections, and have been proactive in implementing change which has significantly improved the quality of care for young people.
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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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) 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 all stakeholders, in particular parents and professionals. (Regulation 44(2)(a))	01/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children.
Specifically, that bedrooms are redecorated according to each child's personal choice, taste and preference. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that staff appraisals take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care.
This is with specific reference to implementing the systems which have been developed to ascertain the views of stakeholders. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is one of three homes owned and managed by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or children with learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/05/2015	Full	Requires improvement
20/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/06/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people benefit from well-planned care which is personalised to their individual and specific needs. This care is underpinned by strong, reciprocal relationships that provide a foundation for stability and develop a sense of belonging for young people. Staff have created a caring and supportive environment where young people feel safe, valued and respected. They have worked hard to encourage young people to take control over their lives and make positive decisions about their future. They have persevered and made every effort to overcome obstacles that young people face, such as those associated with being an adolescent. Their determination, resilience and 'stick ability' have contributed to two young people making successful transitions to semi-independent living. Written feedback from one social worker stated, 'I am pleased with the holistic nature of the support that the placement has provided. The young person has made excellent progress. The placement has been child focused and responsive to his needs. Most importantly, I know he feels valued by staff and had confidence in the care provided.' Staff ensure that the daily routine promotes young people's participation in education. They maintain strong links with educational professionals and have used these well to ensure that barriers to learning are minimised. This has meant that, when young people have struggled with their attendance and engagement, contingency plans have been developed and every effort made to implement these successfully. For example, this level of support and effort has meant that one young person's risks could be safely managed in a college environment and has enabled him to attain his CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card, which will allow him to work on building and construction sites. Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain good physical and emotional health and well-being. Staff monitor young people's health and provide the necessary support to ensure that routine checks and appointments are up to date. When necessary, young people are supported to access specialist healthcare services, such as the child and adolescent mental health service. Staff regularly talk to young people about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. When concerns arise, they are proactive in referring young people to the relevant agencies for support. For example, strong links have been established with the substance misuse service, which has engaged some young people in work on the dangers of substance misuse, in particular the risks associated with cannabis. There are many opportunities for young people to have their say through house	

meetings, key-work sessions and everyday discussion. Staff are constantly asking young people what they want to do, and they plan the day-to-day running of the home around their preference and choice. Young people know how to raise concerns and are confident that they are listened to and taken seriously by staff. There has been one complaint since the last inspection, which was managed to the satisfaction of the complainant. Young people are encouraged to take an interest in their care plans and have their own child-friendly version of this. Key workers help young people to prepare for important meetings to ensure that their views are integral to the care planning process. One social worker said, 'I could see that they had done a lot of work with her to prepare her for her review. I am really impressed with their advocacy on her behalf, in particular in relation to education.'

Staff are aware of the benefits that young people gain from engaging in positive recreational and social experiences. They make every effort to source activities and clubs based on young people's individual hobbies and interests, and encourage young people to sustain these. One young person, who has recently been admitted to the home, spoke enthusiastically about the activities that she had done since arriving. This included visits to the safari park, weekends away, street dance, climbing and trips to the park. She was particularly pleased with her ice-skating lessons and was very excited when staff gave her a pair of ice-skating boots for her birthday, which was celebrated during the inspection.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their families and other people who are important to them. Well-organised and safe arrangements are in place to ensure that contact is a positive experience for all involved. This helps young people to maintain their identity and ensures that attachments with key people are maintained.

The house is suitably decorated, furnished and well maintained. Young people are very comfortable and at ease in their home. A number of communal areas have been personalised, with photographs of the young person and staff enjoying fun activities. Some effort has been made to personalise her bedroom with personal possessions. However, the bedroom has not been redecorated since the last young person moved out, therefore the wallpaper does not reflect the individual tastes of this young person.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Safeguarding arrangements are very effective, and keeping young people safe is integral to daily practice. Staff are trained in child protection and fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate a good awareness of each young person's risks and vulnerabilities and take appropriate action to manage these effectively.	

The home has strong links with a number of safeguarding agencies and professionals, including the children's safeguarding team, the police, the team to counter child sexual exploitation and the substance misuse service. The manager and staff have been proactive in referring concerns and engaging these services, when necessary. For example, when young people have gone missing from home, they have liaised with the police and worked closely with them to locate and return the young person. They share pertinent information such as concerns about the places where young people are going, and strategy meetings have been convened, often at the manager's request, when patterns of concerning behaviour have emerged. This has promoted a well-coordinated, multi-agency approach to the management of young people's risk-taking behaviour.

Staff take a non-confrontational approach to helping young people to manage their behaviour. They act as positive role models and reinforce positive behaviour through affirmation, praise and encouragement. Young people are involved in setting their own behaviour targets, which are part of the in-house rewards system. These are highly individualised and are specific to each young person's age, needs and ability. Young people's achievements, no matter how small, are acknowledged and celebrated. Young people are clear about boundaries and rules, and staff are proportionate in challenging young people when these are not observed. Staff encourage them to discuss and explore their behaviour and put right their misdemeanour, with a strong emphasis on maintaining positive relationships. Consequently, sanctions are rarely used and physical restraint has not been necessary since the last inspection.

Recruitment practice throughout the organisation has improved significantly. The manager is fully involved in the recruitment of staff, which ensures that she is able to assess their ability and ensure that they have the right skills and attributes to work in the home. Three staff have been recruited since the last inspection. Detailed records are maintained in the home and confirm that all staff have been checked and vetted prior to starting work to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable young people.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected effectively by a range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks that are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Young people and staff are regularly involved in fire drills to ensure that they know how to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post since 2009. She has a good level of experience and is suitably qualified. Following the last full inspection, the manager	

resigned her registration with a second home, allowing her to focus her attention on the management of this service. This has been highly effective in ensuring that the home operates in accord with the aims and objectives outlined in its statement of purpose.

The manager is child focused and demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring that young people's needs are integral to all aspects of service delivery. She is well supported by an experienced deputy manager who demonstrates the same level of commitment. Together, they have worked hard to establish and lead an experienced team of staff who consistently deliver a good standard of care. This has benefited young people immensely and contributed to them making good progress in many aspects of their lives. This is recognised by both professionals and young people, who express their appreciation of staff's efforts.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of young people's needs. They have high aspirations and set realistic, age-appropriate goals for them. Staff know young people well and have a good understanding of how to meet their individual needs. They talk enthusiastically about caring for young people and are proud of the contribution that they have made to their successes and achievements.

The team is made up of a good mix of different gender, age and ethnicity. All staff have a relevant childcare qualification. New staff are well inducted and have their competency assessed throughout their induction and probationary period. Staff confirm that they are well supported and regularly receive purposeful supervision from either the manager or deputy manager. All staff have their performance appraised annually and have personal development plans in place. The manager is in the process of reviewing these plans with a view to making them less generic, and more purposeful and challenging for the individual staff members.

All staff are provided with mandatory training, including safeguarding, behaviour management and restraint, and first aid. The manager maintains good oversight of training and it is regularly refreshed. Additionally, staff are provided with reasonably good opportunities to enhance their knowledge through needs-led training and research-based learning. One member of staff is currently reviewing and developing equality and diversity in the home, which could be extremely useful in building the staff's understanding of one young person's cultural heritage and background.

The home has made significant improvement since the last full inspection. The manager has worked hard to make the necessary changes and demonstrates a strong commitment to improving further the already high levels of care and support available to young people. She uses a range of internal quality assurance processes effectively to monitor staff practice, review young people's progress and ensure that their records are relevant and up to date. She demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and has development plans in place to make any necessary improvements. Additional scrutiny is provided through

monthly monitoring visits that are undertaken by an independent visitor. Following each of his visits, the visitor prepares a report which the manager can use for the purpose of improvement. This process would benefit from a more consistent approach to gathering and representing stakeholder views, in particular those of young people's families and professionals.

The manager has taken suitable action to address the two requirements from the last inspection. Procedures are now in place and have been implemented for the disposal of illegal substances. Policies have been amended, and the roles and responsibilities of staff when supervising family contact have been made clearer. This process was further enhanced during the inspection when the manager created a detailed risk assessment which adds further guidance and clarity for staff.

Some progress is noted in relation to the recommendation that was also made. The manager has developed a range of systems for gathering the views of young people, families and professionals. These are to be used as part of the appraisal process. However, these have not yet been implemented.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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