

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC386837
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd
Registered person address	New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd, 5 Bramhall Park Road, Bramhall, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK7 3DQ

Responsible individual	Bharati Parikh
Registered manager	Amie Evans
Inspector	Stella Lovie

Inspection date	02/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 Requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. The home was last inspected in May 2015. It was found to require improvement, particularly in relation to leadership and management. Six requirements and two recommendations were made to bring practice into line with regulation and to promote further improvements. At the point of this interim inspection, the Registered Manager has effectively addressed all these concerns. This shows she learns from inspection activity and has raised the performance of the home so that young people are kept safe and their welfare is promoted. Young people make good progress in many aspects of their lives. They are fully engaged with their education which is testament to their emotional resilience. They have good attendance and are progressing well in line with their abilities. They benefit from well-planned care, which is highly personalised to their specific needs. The manager has established positive relationships with placing authorities and other agencies. This has enabled one young person to progress from several years of non-school attendance to a stable education provision with almost 100% attendance. As his education professional commented: 'I think staff are very proactive. They work well with us to try to manage his behaviour. I like what I hear from him about the home's consistent application of boundaries. It feels like he has a very good relationship with them. His maths teacher tells me he's doing more work than he was and his attitude has improved.' The young person attended his placing authority awards ceremony with staff which validated his sense of pride and achievement. He has plans in place to go to college in September 2016. This amounts to considerable progress from his starting point. Evidence demonstrates close working with relevant agencies to do careful matching of the second young person to the existing young person since the last inspection. The provider sourced as much information as possible and arranged additional training for staff to help them to support the new young person. The Registered Manager was appropriately assertive with the placing authority to obtain relevant documents and arrange appropriate discussions to enable his future move into independence. Opportunities for young people to practice independence skills are interwoven throughout the daily routine of the home. Relevant young people are further supported by structured independence	

programmes to encourage them to learn practical and life skills such as budgeting, cooking and use of public transport. This helps young people to gain competence as part of a natural process of growing up, supported by adults.

Young people are assisted through key working and more specialist interventions to develop an understanding of their lives, employ coping strategies and gain some resilience to adversity. For example, staff provide young people with good information and guidance on a range of health and social issues including healthy eating, the dangers of smoking and risks associated with substance misuse. Staff work hard to encourage young people to stop putting their health at risk through substance misuse, albeit with varying degrees of success.

External professionals complement the manager and staff on their pro-active approach to managing and reducing risk, and in identifying and promptly responding to emerging concerns. Young people are encouraged to learn how to regulate their emotions and acquire reflective skills to make sense of what has happened to them. As a result, they learn better control of impulses and difficult emotions so they are more equipped for successful adult life. As one social worker commented: 'Staff have been able to develop effective working relationships with my young person. The progress he has made has surpassed my expectations. The transparent boundaries and process, the consistency with which they are applied by staff and their child focussed approach have helped him to develop better social skills and coping strategies. The staff team have certainly facilitated or enabled the change in him I know he feels valued by the placement and has confidence in the care he is provided.'

Young people indicate that they feel safe and staff clearly demonstrate respect and regard for them. As one young person said: 'I can approach staff with any problems. I feel staff are there for me and help me to achieve my independence tasks. When I ask for a different hobby or interests, staff have arranged it for me.' As result, relationships between staff and young people are warm, caring and supportive. This provides young people with good opportunities to form and develop appropriate attachments and trust. This means that staff have not needed to use any form of restraint since the last inspection and there have been very few occasions when young people have gone missing. Risk assessments are thorough, insightful and suitably individualised so that they reflect the more diverse needs and personalities of the young people. They are regularly up-dated to ensure they remain relevant and purposeful. However, two shortfalls are identified in relation to safeguarding matters: one concerns more assertive interventions by staff when supervised contact arrangements become unsafe; and the other refers to safe disposal of substances believed to be drugs in line with the home's substance abuse policy. However, neither of these shortfalls has had a significant adverse impact on young people's welfare or safety.

The most significant area of positive change since the last inspection has been in relation to much stronger leadership and management arrangements in the home. The Registered Manager now only manages this home and is therefore able to have a far more pervasive presence and influence there. She has recruited a stable

and experienced staff team who work effectively together. Evidence confirms that staff now receive regular supervision, appraisal and relevant training so that their practice is confident and competent. This is confirmed by discussion with staff and with one young person, and is further endorsed by the in-house psychotherapist who recently commented: 'The team has developed and offers lots of different skills in many areas. The team appears to be very solid and well-skilled.' However, appraisals would give a more comprehensive picture of staff performance if young people's comments were included.

Monitoring arrangements provide robust scrutiny of practice and performance of the home, identifying areas for improvement. This ensures that practice is focused on outcomes for young people. It provides an effective check for compliance with regulations and standards, ensuring that young people's needs are central to proceedings and they are safely cared for at all times. The manager uses learning from practice and systematic feedback to improve the experiences and care of young people. For example, she obtains direct testimony from young people, staff, parents, carers and external professionals, and reflects on this in her internal monitoring to inform the development of the service.

Overall the home has unequivocally improved its effectiveness since the last inspection. Two requirements and one recommendation are made to further improve practice.

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 learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
20/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
25/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
13/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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
12: The protection of children standard: 12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; with specific regard to appropriate disposal of any substances believed to be drugs that are found.	02/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard: 12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; with specific regard to appropriate intervention during supervised contact sessions.	02/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally

appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should 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. (The Guide, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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 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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