

SC386837

Registered provider: New Horizons (Stockport) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately-owned home provides care for up to two young people who can no longer live at home.

The manager has been registered since 2008.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 January 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Full	Good
15/08/2018	Full	Good
11/10/2017	Full	Good
06/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are effective plans in place that support children throughout their stay at this home. Children benefit from well-planned and personalised care that meets their needs effectively, and this contributes to sustainable change and improvement in their lives. As a result, they make good progress in aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development, relative to their individual starting points.

Children said that their views, wishes and feelings are taken seriously. They have opportunities to talk to staff, and they are encouraged to comment on all aspects of their care. Generally, written formal complaints are robustly processed. However, on one occasion, the manager did not take the same action when a child made some negative comments about a member of staff. The child withdrew his comments, and his social worker discussed this incident with him, but there is little recorded information on the action taken and the outcome.

Records that are kept in the home show the progress that children are making. However, the manager has not archived old information. For example, there are several copies of the children's placement plans, review documents and educational plans in the children's files. This means that staff and children may not have the most up-to-date information available.

Children receive the support they need to maintain contact with their families. Some children have gone from being supervised to having unsupervised contact. This is because the manager has advocated on their behalf that the restrictions are no longer necessary due to the progress the child has made. Further to this, some children live a long distance from their family home. Staff support the children and families by meeting at an arranged mid-point or for an activity. As a result, children enjoy the time that they spend with the people that are most important to them.

Staff maintain effective partnerships with health professionals to promote children's physical and emotional well-being. For example, one child has stopped smoking with support from a smoking cessation clinic. In addition to this, children receive additional support with their mental health. As a result, they are learning to regulate their emotions and make positive changes in their behaviours.

Children receive the help and support they need to overcome the barriers they may have experienced with their education. One child said, 'I love college and I want to be a chef.' He continued to say that he often practised his culinary skills at the home. Staff work closely with the providers of children's education and have all the necessary educational documents. However, one child's personal education plan lacks information. For example, it does not say if previous actions were successful or not, and new actions do not have any timescales for progression. The manager has not challenged the content of this document.

Staff prepare children to become independent. For example, they are routinely involved in shopping, helping to prepare meals, doing their laundry and helping with chores in the home. However, neither child has their own local authority pathway plan. This means that the staff and children are not working towards an agreed plan.

The home is warm, welcoming, and decorated and furnished to a good standard. The children take pride in their home and help with chores. They personalise their bedrooms, which gives them a sense of belonging.

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

Children said that they were safe, happy and well cared for at this home. They said that they can talk to staff about anything and that this reassures them.

Excellent records are kept of any safeguarding concerns. The manager works closely with safeguarding professionals to ensure that children are protected. The manager makes sure that strategy meetings are held, and that multi-agency working is high on her agenda. This means that everyone is involved in the decision-making process and that they understand their role in protecting the children.

Staff apply the home's rules and boundaries consistently to promote a safe environment for children. As a result, children do not go missing from the home. This contributes to their experience of stability in their lives.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted in the home. Children do not behave in a way that would require the use of physical intervention by staff. This positive environment helps children to manage conflict in a constructive way. As a result, they are better equipped to deal with challenges they may face as they move towards independence.

Risk-taking behaviours, such as self-injurious behaviour, have reduced in frequency significantly, considering children's starting points. Generally, staff have a good understanding of the children's specific needs and emerging vulnerabilities and take appropriate action to manage them. However, some staff have not signed the most up-to-date risk assessments. This does not ensure that they are aware of any changes.

Children are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Staff are trained in child protection and are skilled and knowledgeable in relation to their safeguarding roles. However, staff training in several areas of keeping children safe has not been refreshed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, staff have not received bespoke training relating to the children's specific needs. This does not ensure that staff have the skills to fully support the children. In contrast to this, staff prioritise the safety of children and are always alert to the risk of harm. Children are kept safe and develop a strong sense of personal safety.

Sanctions used to address negative behaviour are monitored by the registered manager. This ensures that the use of sanctions is balanced, fair and proportionate. Staff help children to self-regulate their own behaviour. They anticipate issues well and have a good understanding of the triggers for children's behaviour. Consequently, staff respond to incidents in a calm, controlled, professional and sensitive way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is led by a suitably qualified manager who has the experience to fulfil her role competently. She is supported by a deputy manager. All the staff have a recognised childcare qualification in caring for children in residential care.

The home has experienced some instability due to staff sickness and staff leaving during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant that the manager has been working shifts, which has reduced her capacity in her management role. Staff supervision, training and staff meetings have been sporadic during this time. This does not ensure that staff are well supported to complete their role.

There are currently five permanent members of staff working out of the eight needed to care for the children well. Therefore, the manager has been using agency staff to meet the shortfall. The manager has ensured that the same agency staff are used to give consistency to the children. She has robustly ensured that each agency staff member has excellent recruitment records. This protects children from harm. In addition to this, recruitment is underway, and interviews will take place soon.

Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with the children's families, schools, social workers and other professional agencies. This ensures that children benefit from effective help and the best possible all-round support. Staff ensure that the needs of children are prioritised and met effectively.

The registered manager uses the home's internal and external monitoring activities to identify improvements.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; 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 (a)(b)(c))	31 March 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii))	31 March 2022

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have a pathway plan from their local authority.	
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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff receive specific training in harmful sexual behaviours. Further to this, that all training is refreshed regularly.	31 March 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31 March 2022
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1)(3))	31 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records kept in the children's home are signed and dated by the author. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents'. This is specifically in relation to the

structure of the children's files. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

- The registered person should lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. In particular, ensure that staff meetings are held regularly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

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: SC386837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Horizons (Stockport) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Bharati Parikh

Registered manager: Amie Evans

Inspector

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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