

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 children who can no longer live at home. The manager registered with Ofsted in 2008.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 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: 13 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good
15/08/2018	Full	Good
11/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Inspectors were aware that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. As Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, and due to an ongoing investigation, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were not considered at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

There is one child currently living in the home, who has lived there since last summer. Two children have moved out since last inspection.

The child did not have a positive experience of moving into the home. The inspector was informed that the child is due to move on from the home as the staff cannot keep him safe. The child was informed about the move and has his belongings packed. However, there is no clear plan in place or any timescale for when the move will take place. This leaves the child uncertain about his future.

The child has been the victim of assaults in the community. There is a culture in the staff team to blame the child for these incidents. There is an emphasis on protecting the staff rather than supporting the child to make progress and have positive experiences.

The child is not receiving any education. Sufficient action has not been taken to work with school staff to re-engage and reassure the child. In addition, staff have not ensured that there are appropriate plans in place to enable the child to complete his forthcoming exams. In addition, staff have not supported the child to undertake any revision or have a clear structure to the day. The child told the inspectors he did not have any stationary as there is no expectation for him to complete any schoolwork. As a result, it is likely the child will leave school without qualifications that he is reported to be capable of achieving.

The child's general health needs are met. However, there have been delays in the staff obtaining medical support and advice following the child being assaulted and an incident of self-harm.

The staff team fails to understand the impact of previous trauma on the child. The manager has also not escalated concerns over delays in ongoing police investigations. As a result, the child's emotional and physical well-being is not being promoted.

Staff have not consulted with the child about his care or provided him with an advocate to ensure that his voice is heard. In addition, the child has not felt comfortable to share information with staff following an incident in the community. This does not ensure that the child is able to seek advice and guidance from the adults caring for him.

The child is encouraged to cook his own meals. However, staff do not provide appropriate levels of support to guide the child to further develop his independence skills. This has affected the child's confidence.

Time with family is supported and supervised by staff in line with the child's plans. However, the child's parent said that communication was poor and staff did not keep them updated after significant incidents in the child's life.

Following the incidents in the community, staff have restricted the areas that they will take the child to. This means that the child is unable to do activities that he previously enjoyed.

The home is unclean in places and the child's bedroom has both visible damp and mould. The child has made requests for a new bed and mattress, which have not yet been actioned. This results in the child not living in pleasant and comfortable surroundings.

There are locks on internal doors and bedroom door alarms in place that are used as a blanket approach for all children who live in the home. These reduce children's privacy and access in their home.

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

The child is not supported to develop the necessary skills to keep himself safe. The staff are risk averse and have imposed restrictions when there is not the legal basis to do so. They have not considered how they can keep the child safe in the community.

Staff are not aware of all known risks to the child or how to appropriately identify and manage them. Risk management plans lack detail and guidance for staff to follow to support the child. When considering children living together, managers have not included an assessment of how they will support and keep children with similar risks safe. This means that children are at increased risk of harm.

When room searches have taken place, the child has not been informed to understand the reasons why this action has been taken. Additionally, children's views on consequences used have not been sought. This means that children are not encouraged to reflect and learn from incidents.

Staff do not have the appropriate training needed to keep children safe and support them. Some staff were unclear on the home's statement of purpose and the needs of the child that they care for. This means that the staff do not have the skills and knowledge to support the child with their individual risks.

There has been one complaint made against a member of staff from a child. This was documented. However, managers have not identified learning points for staff to improve their care practices.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The deputy manager is currently overseeing the home in the absence of the manager. The manager has not received appropriate training or support from senior managers to ensure that the home is operated in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

There are significant shortfalls in the manager's oversight of the home. None of the previous requirements made at the last inspection have been met.

There have been several incidents in the home. However, the recording of these incidents is poor or missing. When incidents are recorded, records lack detail and are not reviewed by managers. This means that there is not the opportunity for the staff to learn from incidents or for concerns around staff practice, skills and knowledge to be addressed.

Complaints are not logged appropriately. One complaint that was recorded indicated that a child had complained about a member of staff. However, managers have not identified learning points for the person involved to improve their care practices. This reduces transparency and makes it difficult for managers to review patterns and trends and support children to understand what has happened because of their complaint.

Inspectors identified concerns about the staff team's understanding of professional boundaries and how much information that it can share with children. Inappropriate staff practice is not addressed or reflected on and the culture in the home is not child focused.

Not all staff have received appraisals to support their development and practice. There has been an improvement in the regularity of supervisions since the last inspection. However, staff have not been encouraged to discuss the child's needs as staff believe the child is moving out soon. Instead, staff are being prepared to welcome another child to the home.

Managers have not notified the regulator of all significant incidents. This means that the regulator does not have a full oversight of significant events in the children's lives.

Safer recruitment practices are not adhered to. Managers do not ensure that gaps in employment are explored or that references provided have been verified. This means that managers cannot be assured that staff at the home are suitable to be employed there.

The language used in documents is not always helpful and puts blame on the child for situations when they are the victim. This gives the child the impression that they were at fault.

An independent person visits the home monthly and produces a report. However, it is not clear in the reports whether these visits are announced or unannounced. The visitor has also not identified some of the shortfalls found at this inspection.

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
*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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(a) (2)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(d))	24 April 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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	24 April 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;	31 May 2023

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)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)) This relates specifically to ensuring that the statement of purpose reflects the individual risks of children being cared for. This also relates to staff ensuring that children have positive experiences when they move in and out of the home.	
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; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; 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;	31 May 2023

raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; 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; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(x)(b)) This relates specifically to ensuring that children are engaged and attending education, and that staff understand the reasons why a child may be refusing to attend and make arrangements to minimise this disruption. This further relates to when a child is not attending education, that the staff are supporting education in the home to complete work advised by schools and that the children and staff have a structured plan of education. This also relates to staff ensuring that they communicate with education providers and ensure that children receive the assessments they need. This further relates to ensuring that children have the resources and equipment needed to complete education.	
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— ensure that staff—	31 May 2023

protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. Make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(ix)) This relates specifically to ensuring that children are provided with an advocate. This also relates to children being supported when they find something difficult. This also relates to children being able to access the local community independently. This further relates to children being provided with new furniture when required to ensure that they are comfortable.	
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; 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— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and	31 May 2023

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This relates specifically to the removing of locks on communal doors. This also relates to the use of bedroom door alarms being monitored and reviewed.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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; 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 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 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(c)) This relates specifically to children being informed when room searches have been completed and that records are evaluated to review their effectiveness by managers.	31 May 2023
The registered person must— The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	31 May 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)) This relates specifically to ensuring that children receive regular updates and outcomes from investigations that are impacting their well-being.	31 May 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)) This relates specifically to ensuring that the regulator is made aware of any incident of police involvement, or any allegation that a child makes against a staff member.	31 May 2023
A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (3) (4)(a)(b)) This relates specifically to reports identifying whether the visit is announced or unannounced. This further relates to the visitor identifying issues that affect whether a child is safeguarded and their well-being is promoted. The visitor must seek feedback from a range of sources to help give a robust assessment of the care provided to children.	31 May 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: SC386837

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: Amie Evans

Inspectors

Kerri Lynch-Mahoney, Social Care Inspector
Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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