

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC386837
Inspector	Ruth Loughridge
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	New Horizons (Stockport) Ltd
Registered person address	5 Bramhall Park Road, Bramhall STOCKPORT Cheshire SK7 3DQ
Responsible individual	Bharati Parikh
Registered manager	Amie Rebeka Evans
Date of last inspection	13/03/2014

Inspection date	25/06/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home provides well planned and reviewed care that focusses upon the individual needs of each young person. High staff ratios and collaborative working with external professionals means that young people's risk taking behaviour is significantly reduced.

The involvement of young people in the running of the home, the short and longer term plans for their care, contributes toward the progress they have made. Young people are safely allowed to develop autonomy in line with their risk assessments and consultation with placing authorities.

Although staff are all trained in the use of physical intervention, it has not been necessary to intervene with young people in this way. Sanctions are reasonable and are often discussed and agreed with placing authorities.

There are effective quality assurance systems in place which are clear and consistently implemented. The Regulation 33 visitor has dual roles within the organisation and a review has been recommended to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

Young people benefit from the systems that are in place which allow for excellent

communication between staff, their training and their supervision. These systems and a strong, professional ethos all contribute toward the consistent care and support of the young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2014	Interim	good progress
17/10/2013	Full	good
26/11/2012	Interim	good progress
07/08/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the register person of the agency, with particular reference to ensuring the independence the monthly monitoring visits to the home (NMS 19.3)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people benefit from positive relationships with a committed staff team who are enthusiastic about their potential. Through this, young people develop an understanding of their needs and what they need to do to reach their goals. They are fully involved in setting their goals which means that they are motivated toward achievement.

The home offers a nurturing environment where, with encouragement and support from staff, young people grow in confidence and build a more positive self-view. One professional commented, 'Where (young person) was struggling with their identity as a looked after child, the home have helped them to reduce their negative view of this – focusing on the positive and showing they can use the status of being looked after to their advantage.'

Individually tailored programmes of education are provided which capture young people's interest and imagination. Therefore, education attendance and achievement is good, taking into account their starting point at the time of placement. One relative said, '(Young person) has never focused on anything before they are now believing in themselves. The teacher has made a massive difference in their life. They are doing work and doing tests and it's building their self-worth. No one until now has given them any belief in them.'

Young people understand their health needs and they have opportunity to access a range of health and wellbeing services. Good health and healthy lifestyles are promoted and the staff work with young people and explore ways in which they can confidently access services that can meet their needs. There are clear expectations that young people have structure and routine to their day which helps to promote regular patterns of eating and sleeping and which impacts positively on all areas of their lives.

Contact with family and friends is recognised as an important part of young people's identity and staff enable young people to foster these vital relationships. This allows young people to maintain their sense of belonging within their families and to benefit from ongoing family support as they reach independence.

Staff work co-operatively with young people and their placing authorities toward future plans for independent living. When speaking about the home one young person said, 'It's helped me become independent. I can cook different foods and wash my clothes and can shop and budget so I feel ready to move on.'

Quality of care

outstanding

Initially, when young people come to live at the home, their levels of supervision and support are very high. A number of external professionals commented upon the strength of this approach, one of whom stated, 'The levels of supervision and support have been incredibly beneficial and now they have expanded (young person's) personal freedoms through negotiations with (young person).' This means that young people have been able to safely develop autonomy and enjoy free time with friends and family.

The passionate, positive approach of staff and their high aspirations for young people enable young people to recognise their own skills and abilities and to focus on their future plans. Creative and imaginative placement plans engage young people in assessing their own progress and reviewing their targets for the following month. Young people work with staff to plan their activities and menus for each week, which not only allows them to make choices, it develops skills they will need for independent living.

The staff team have established excellent partnerships with external agencies. This helps to ensure that young people can access the services they need in a timely way, that they are safe and that they are well supported through periods of transition. One professional stated. 'They are very open to asking for advice and exploring issues with relevant specialist professionals. They take their responsibilities seriously. They are very committed to young people. They are forward and proactive by comparison with other care homes I have worked with.'

Detailed recording, daily handover and regular team meetings contribute toward effective communication between staff. Staff say that they all 'sing from the same hymn sheet' with one staff member commenting, 'We communicate everything, even down to the smallest detail which may seem trivial, but for our young people it may be the start of something, so we can try to stop things escalating.' A relative stated, 'There is consistency and commitment from staff. (young person) can take advantage of situations and the staff set boundaries.'

The caring approach of staff is underpinned by a strong theoretical approach that is evident in recording of incidents, measures of control and one to one work with young people. For example, role play was used with a young person to help prepare them for stressful situations they may encounter and incident reports set out the specific techniques employed to deescalate incidents. The professional approach applied, combines with the excellent staff communication, to provide young people with consistent care.

Young people benefit from a homely environment where the atmosphere, as one young person put it, is 'chilled'. A number of external professionals commented upon this with one stating, 'The staff go to great lengths to make it feel like a home – it's where conversations take place, where people eat together and watch TV together.'

The garden provides an attractive outside space, and the internal furnishings are of a very high standard. Young people have a say in the choice of furnishings and one young person spoke about being able to personalise and decorate their own room which they keep clean and tidy.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people confirm that they feel safe and one young person commented, 'Staff always know where I am and they ring me when I'm out.'

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place in relation to young people's behaviour, their vulnerabilities and activities. Because risks are identified, the staff are equipped to prevent matters from escalating and when incidents do occur, the response is timely and multi-agency. This means that incidents are evaluated and arrangements for young people are reviewed by the various agencies involved to reduce future risks. External professionals are satisfied that the home takes all appropriate action to keep young people safe with one professional commenting, 'Staff have done everything they can to keep (young person) safe. This home is one of the best homes I work with in terms of reporting and referring things to the right agencies at the right time.'

In relation to young people going missing from care, one professional commented, 'Prior to admission to the home missings were about 15 or 20 a month so there is a significant reduction. (young person) has been saying that they do not want to go missing as they now realise the consequences for them.' Staff take immediate action when a young person goes missing and detailed records are kept of all action taken which demonstrates prompt communication with relevant people including the police and family members.

Staff receive safeguarding training which is regularly updated as well as specific training in how to respond when child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a matter of concern. One professional commented, 'They are experienced at dealing with CSE and they know what actions to take. Their CSE risk assessments are outstanding – in-depth and thorough. They are absolutely on the ball with CSE.' The training, experience and diligence of staff ensures appropriate responses where concerns are apparent and helps to minimise risks to young people.

High staff ratios and careful consideration given to the admission of new young people mean that bullying is not identified as a problem at the home.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is physically safe and secure. Health and safety checks are carried out daily, fire alarm tests and drills occur at suitable intervals, heating and electrical installations have up to date safety certificates.

Leadership and management

good

The home has a strong Registered Manager who has been in post since 2009. She is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the responsibilities of the post and holds the Level 5 Diploma.

The registered manager is fully aware and up to date with changes in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 (as amended). The home operates within its Statement of Purpose which has been recently updated in line with new requirements. A range of monitoring systems, which take account of the views of young people, their relatives and professionals, are in place and they are utilised to improve outcomes for young people. As well as internal systems for monitoring, further scrutiny is provided through monitoring by the visitor carrying out Regulation 33 visits. However, the arrangements for the Regulation 33 visitor do not indicate sufficient independence and it is recommended that these arrangements are reviewed by the organisation.

All significant events are promptly notified to placing authorities and, where necessary, the authority in which the home is located. One external professional stated that the staff, '... are very familiar with the statutory process and attend multi-agency meetings and confidently talk about the risks posed to young people.'

Staff feel fully supported and guided to provide high quality care for the young people and they utilise regular supervision to reflect upon and develop their practice. Staff annual appraisals are an important element of planning for the future development of the home. There has been a delay in completion of the annual appraisals which the organisation has undertaken to complete immediately.

Young people benefit from a stable and enthusiastic staff team. There is substantial experience within the team, all of whom are qualified with at least the Level 3 Diploma. Training for staff is ongoing including specific training to meet the particular needs of young people. The manager is confident that any training requested, would be provided.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.