

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>27/10/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC481443</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Hexagon Care Services Limited</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 1 Tustin Court, Riversway, PRESTON, PR2 2YQ</b>
<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Mark Dunn</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Matthew Gascoigne</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Tracy Murty</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>27/10/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
<b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

**SC481443**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is inadequate because:**

- Leadership and management arrangements are weak. Managers have not sufficiently focused on monitoring and oversight of the quality of care provided to young people. This has led to poor progress and outcomes for young people placed in this home.
- Managers do not always have a clear sense of the reasons for some young people going missing from care. Some placement plans for young people lack clarity which has resulted in them being placed in potentially dangerous situations when outside of the home.
- Not all young people have care or placement plans in place. Managers do not have clear systems to monitor such shortfalls. Young people do not receive the level, or type, of care they need, in relation to their health and educational needs. As a result, they are not making progress in either area and lack structure during their time in the home, when not engaging in education.
- Young people are not safeguarded. This is due to the inconsistent and incomplete planning and completion of documentation for new admissions to the home. Managers have failed to ensure that relevant plans and risk assessments have been completed in a timely manner. Managers have failed to chase missing documentation from placing authorities for young people.
- Staffing levels within the home do not sufficiently meet the complex needs of young people at all times. A lack of clear management oversight and contingency planning with regards to staffing, has resulted in difficulties in supporting contact arrangements and managing young people's challenging behaviours at times.
- Young people do not receive clear advice and support in how to make a complaint. Some young people would benefit from independent advocacy services, but these have not been offered to them. Young people also do not consistently receive feedback on issues or concerns they may raise with managers. This undermines their ability to feel able to share their views, wishes and feelings with staff and managers.
- Several internal areas and rooms in the home require redecoration and improvement, as they currently present as not homely.

### **The children's home strengths**

- Staff have developed very comprehensive and clear independence planning packs for relevant young people to work through. These will provide young people with the skills required to make a successful transition to adult life.
- Young people have personalised their bedrooms to reflect their likes and report feeling well supported by the staff team and managers.

## 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
<p>12. The protection of children standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure</p> <p>(a) that staff -</p> <p>(i) 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 harm to the child</p>	27/11/2015
<p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met standard, the registered person must ensure that if staff -</p> <p>(c) considers a placing authority's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans (Regulation 5(c))</p>	27/11/2015
<p>14. The care planning standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person should ensure</p>	27/11/2015

<p>(e) that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if –</p> <p>(i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs</p>	
<p>13. The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard in relation to paragraph the registered person must</p> <p>(f) 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</p>	27/11/2015
<p>7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, the registered person should</p> <p>(a) ensure that staff</p> <p>(iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child</p> <p>(b) ensure that each child –</p> <p>(iii) ensure that each child is given appropriate advocacy support</p> <p>(d) ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after their arrival about –</p> <p>(ii) how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the care they receive and how any such complaint or representations will be with</p>	27/11/2015
<p>ensure that children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises and that any limitations on a child's 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,</p>	27/11/2015

revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe (Regulation 21(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
ensure the registered person maintains in relation to a children's home the records in Schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. This is with particular reference to the register of children (Regulation 37(2)(a)(b))	27/11/2015
the registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 16(1))  the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in the manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 16(5))	27/11/2015
ensure that the registered person establishes and maintains a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. With particular regard to ensuring that renewal of staff documentation is robustly completed (Regulation 45(2)(c))	27/11/2015
ensure the registered person maintains records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. With particular reference to copies of any plan for the child prepared by the child's placing authority, and of the placement plan. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	27/11/2015

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that when a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required, and challenge them through regulation 5 - engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met, if this doesn't happen. (The

Guide to the Quality Standards, page 34, paragraph 7.10)

- ensure that contingency plans are prepared in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. If it is likely that there might only be one member of staff on duty at any time the manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children's care, including any likely risks. The assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.18)
- ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children and maintains a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- ensure that where children are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff work closely with the placing authority so that that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- ensure that the home's policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children reflect the requirements of other relevant legislation, with particular reference to the risks from radicalisation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 44, paragraph 9.22)
- ensure that each child's placement plan sets out the permissions that their placing authority has delegated to the registered person. This should provide clarity on the home's ability to give permission for sleep-overs. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 31, paragraph 6.2)

## **Full report**

### **Information about this children's home**

This privately run children's home is registered for five young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This is a recent variation, a reduction from accommodating six young people, in order to provide care for four young people in the main house and one young person in the semi-independent flat in the grounds of the home.

### **Recent inspection history**

This is the first inspection of this children's home since it was registered by Ofsted in October 2014.



## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
<p>Young people do not receive the quality of care necessary to ensure that they are safeguarded from actual or potential harm at all times. Managers have failed to ensure that all necessary information is received prior to young people being admitted to the home, or after they have moved in. This has led to significant gaps in knowledge of young people and as a consequence meant staff are not fully able to provide the necessary care to young people at all times.</p> <p>Managers have failed to chase placing authorities for missing documentation for some young people, leading to incomplete plans and risk assessments for them. Not all young people have care or placement plans in place. This seriously undermines staff and managers ability to provide safe and relevant care and support to them at all times. Managers have further failed to request urgent meetings or reviews with placing authorities when they believe a young person is at risk of harm, or where there are concerns about the care provided to them. This leads to young people's needs not being met and significantly impacts on their ability to make progress in all areas of their lives.</p> <p>Young people have not been provided with information in relation to their local authority's complaints procedures. Some young people would benefit from access to independent advocacy services, but staff have not ensured that this has been formally offered or recorded. One young person stated that they were not aware of the complaints procedure for their local authority and stated they would want to access and use it. This potentially isolates young people and does not provide them with the support and guidance they need.</p> <p>Most young people living in this home do not have education or training in place. Managers have failed to robustly and consistently challenge placing authorities about this and have also not escalated their concerns to the young people's independent reviewing officer, or senior managers in local authorities. Young people do not have a structure to their day; staff do not work with them to engage in suitable activities, which would assist them to regain their confidence in education. As one young person commented: 'I tend to stay in bed most of the day, or play on my games console as I only have 4 hours education a week.'</p> <p>Staff try to support and encourage young people to take part in social activities in the local and wider community, with some success. Young people spend time with friends locally and have some engagement in joint activities with other young people and staff. Staff try to proactively support young people to enjoy regular</p>	

contact with their families, providing transport and support to enable contact to take place.

Staff have devised detailed independence training packs for older young people. These set out clear stages and targets for young people to achieve, to help prepare them for their eventual move to independence. Due to recent concerns about several young people's behaviours, it has not been possible for young people to progress to living in the semi-independence flat in the grounds of the home. The flat is also in need of repair and redecoration and is not currently in a fit state for a young person to reside in.

Young people do not receive the health support they require at all times. This is attributable to the lack of information and clarity of recording of their health needs when they are admitted to the home. It is also attributable to the failure of managers in chasing local authorities for health assessments, transfer of specialist health services from one authority to another and in not liaising and working with local health professionals. Some young people have specific and complex health care needs, which are not being met by the staff team sufficiently. Health plans for young people do not reflect the needs, or work, being done to support young people. A placing authority criticised the staff team and managers for not progressing the needs of one young person stating: 'The placement is not meeting his needs and I feel the home could do more to work with health agencies and professionals to support him.'

Young people do not have access to communal areas on the ground floor of the home during the night. This has not been subject to a risk assessment or regular review by managers. It prevents young people from having the freedom to access all areas of the home at all times. One young person raised their concerns about this in a recent residents meeting, but failed to receive a response from managers as to why such limitations and restrictions are in place. This has led to young people becoming more frustrated around this issue.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
<p>Young people admitted to this home have a wide range of complex needs and risk-taking behaviours. Staff and managers have failed to ensure that local authority care plans, health assessments and other key documentation have been requested from the placing authority, to assist in the formation of placement plans and risk assessments. This seriously undermines the staff team's ability to provide the necessary care, help and protection to young people.</p>	

During this inspection, care and placement plans were missing from two young people's files. Managers had also failed to clarify previous child protection concerns for one young person, and secure key documentation from the placing authority. The manager had made decisions regarding contact for a young person, which were in conflict with the local authority plans, on one occasion. The decision could have placed the young people at serious risk of harm and was not subject to a risk assessment or consultation with the placing authority. Case files for the young person held no information on the decision-making processes. This seriously undermines the security and welfare of young people.

There have been a few incidents of young people going missing from care. Staff take necessary action in relation to following protocols and procedures. They report young people as missing in line with their risk assessments, and case records reflect that this has been done. Managers have failed to ensure that the local authority provides an opportunity for a young person to have an independent return home interview. This further undermines the staff team's ability to understand the reasons for young people going missing and to effectively work with them to reduce their missing from care incidents.

Training is available for staff regarding anti-radicalisation. Not all staff have undertaken this to date. Staff do not demonstrate skills or confidence in responding to any actual or potential concerns relating to young people in this area. Case records do not indicate that any potential concerns have been reported to managers or that further action has been taken or that risk assessments have been put in place. This potentially means that young people's concerning behaviours are not assessed or understood and could place themselves and others at serious risk of harm.

Not all young people's use of the internet is monitored and clear strategies are not in place to ensure their safety at all times. Young people have access to the internet and social media, through the home's computer and personal mobile phones. Monitoring of potentially unsafe behaviours of some young people does not systematically or routinely take place. This potentially places young people at risk of exposure to abuse or in being able to access concerning or dangerous information.

There is a lack of clarity for some young people with regard to the agreed contact arrangements with family and friends. Without clear and robust contact plans in place, some young people could be placed at risk when away from the home. Managers have also failed to ensure that case records, risk assessments and relevant plans are either in place or reviewed and updated. Liaison and working with local authorities is not consistent, or well recorded, when making decisions about young people.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
<p>The manager is registered and been in post since July 2014. He has substantial experience of working within residential childcare settings and has undertaken a wide range of training. He is currently undertaking the Level 5 Diploma and is due to complete this in the near future. He has a National Vocational Qualification at level 4, achieved in 2003.</p> <p>The manager is held in high regard by the staff team, with one member of staff stating how well supported they feel. They commented: 'I used to work in this home as a casual and was really pleased to be able to come back as part of the permanent staff team. I get regular supervision and feel the managers are very supportive.'</p> <p>The home is fully staffed, but due to the challenging behaviours of some young people at times, staffing levels do not present as sufficient to support all young people. Managers increasingly feel the need to support staff in caring for young people. This undermines the manager and deputy manager's ability to perform their management tasks or provide robust oversight of the care provided to young people. The deputy manager admits that there have been recent periods of intense pressure on the staff team, with managers doing more direct work with young people and forming part of the staff rota. This has clearly adversely affected their ability to focus on management tasks in many areas. The manager does not have contingency plans in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing. No formal assessment of the implications of staff shortfalls is evident within the home. There have been occasions where only one member of staff is on shift for periods of time with the young people. This does not provide safe care for young people and could place staff at risk of harm.</p> <p>The manager has made poor decisions regarding contact for a young person, which has been compounded by a lack of recording to evidence why they were made. This could have led to serious risks to the young person. The failure of the manager to chase local authorities for missing documentation, or to request urgent meetings, has resulted in some young people's health and education needs not being met for several months. This significantly reduces young people's ability to make progress in all areas of their lives. Such concerns are compounded by there being no delegated authority agreed, or in place, for at least one young person by their local authority.</p> <p>Missing documentation and key information for some young people seriously undermines the quality of care being provided to them. Managers have failed to develop clear and consistent monitoring and tracking systems, resulting in young people's needs not being met. Managers undertake regular monitoring of all</p>	

aspects of the care provided to young people. This has not, however, resulted in improvements in case recording, planning and service delivery for several young people.

The admissions and discharge register for young people is recorded in two separate filing systems. This does not provide a consistent or clear register of young people moving into or out of the home. One filing system has loosely stored papers, which could be removed or lost.

The manager has systems in place to record checks of staff and renewal dates. The system is clear and includes details of when DBS checks and identification checks for new staff have been done, but has not been consistently updated and checked by the manager recently. This has resulted in up-to-date information not being held on all staff member's file and some key information in relation to DBS and driving licence expiry dates not being known or recorded.

The manager has failed to ensure that the home is operated at all times in line with its statement of purpose. This refers to missing from care return home interviews; health needs of young people; sharing of care plans and complaints procedure information between the home and placing authorities. There are several areas within the statement of purpose which are not currently being adhered to by the manager. Young people are therefore not being cared for in line with the stated aims and objectives of the home.

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

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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