

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	19/09/2016
Unique reference number	1221700
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Hexagon Care Services Limited
Registered provider address	2nd floor, Unit 1 Tustin Court, Riversway, Preston PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual	Jeanette Swift
Registered manager	Peter Croasdale
Inspector	Jackie Line

Previous inspection date	N/A
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1221700

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff, based on mutual respect and trust.
- Young people report that they are happy, settled and safe.
- Young people benefit from placement stability, and receive a good standard of care from a committed, stable and competent staff team.
- Bespoke packages of education inspire most young people's learning. This approach enables them to make sustained progress from their starting points, some of which is exceptional.
- Young people enjoy a range of activities and spend time with their friends in the community. Staff support young people to achieve and, consequently, they grow in confidence and independence.
- Managers and staff respond promptly to safeguarding concerns, ensuring that young people's welfare and safety are promoted.
- Most young people do not engage in risky behaviour, demonstrating the progress that they have made over time. When they do, staff respond appropriately, providing young people with support and challenge to help them to learn from their mistakes.
- Strong leadership ensures that this home is organised and effectively managed.
- Managers have successfully supported staff and young people through a period of change by making a seamless move to new premises.
- Commitment from the registered manager and his deputy sets a positive culture within the home that is supportive, resilient and caring.
- Managers and staff work collaboratively with partner agencies that report high levels of satisfaction with the service.

To continue to improve, the home needs to:

- Ensure that staff keep, and encourage young people to keep, memorabilia of their time spent living at the home. This is so that young people have a record of significant events and positive experiences to take with them when they move on.
- Follow up on recommendations from health assessments in a timely way so that young people receive any outstanding immunisations.

- Prepare young people for independence, in line with their individual needs, and make sure that support is relevant and targeted to each young person.
- Notify all significant events to Ofsted.
- Keep records up to date and ensure that they contain sufficient detail to provide an accurate and clear overview of young people's plans and day-to-day care.
- Ensure that all staff participate in a fire drill so that they know how to evacuate the building safely in an emergency.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislation.

Specifically, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, ensure that all persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- Ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any move from the home to live independently. This includes practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care.

Specifically, ensure that this support is revisited at timely intervals, is targeted in line with young people's needs assessments and that staff have sufficient knowledge to provide this support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

- Ensure that staff organise and ensure each child's attendance at the necessary primary and secondary health services.

In particular, that childhood immunisations are up-to-date for all children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.11)

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child.

Specifically, that placements plans are reviewed to contain up-to-date information throughout, and that daily records and key-working records contain sufficient detail. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Ensure that staff keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 62, paragraph 14.5)

- Ensure that the registered person notifies Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)–(e) occurs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home operated by a private company. It is currently registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people. The home cares for young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This is the home's first inspection since moving premises.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A	N/A	N/A

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>This service excels at developing positive, reciprocal relationships with young people. Skilled staff establish open and honest relationships with young people based on mutual respect and trust. As a result, young people recognise that staff care about them, say they are well supported and consequently they feel valued. Young people describe staff as 'great', and one said: 'I get along with all staff members'.</p> <p>Young people are very happy and settled. Staff provide individualised support and this is helping them to make good progress in different aspects of their development. A young person said: 'I have lived here for two years and during this time I have been looked after really well. I am looking forward to starting college and my future will be great'. Furthermore, professionals report positively about the care young people receive and the positive impact this has on their lives. A social worker said: 'X has really turned himself around during the last six months, and I feel that a large amount of credit is due to the staff that work with X, day in and day out'.</p> <p>One young person is struggling to sustain the progress that he made in the earlier stages of his placement. Staff make some efforts to engage him and are working with the placing authority to review the way forward. This means that managers review progress and take action when concerns are raised.</p> <p>Young people enjoy an array of leisure opportunities, including football, cycling, fishing and holidays. This builds confidence, provides young people with new experiences and allows them to have fun. As they get older, young people want to spend more time out with their friends. Staff encourage and manage this safely, overall.</p> <p>Staff do not keep, or encourage young people, to keep photos and memorabilia of the positive times that they have had while living at the home. This means that staff do not help young people to capture significant events and positive experiences in a format that they can take with them when they move on.</p> <p>Managers and staff seek young people's views and listen to what they have to say. For example, because of what young people said, this year's holiday didn't take place during the summer, and will take place in October instead. Listening to young people's views means that staff enable young people to influence the care and service that they receive.</p>	

Young people participate in review meetings and so contribute to discussions about their care and their future plans. After review meetings, staff undertake follow-up work with young people to make sure that they understand what has been said, and have the opportunity to ask questions. This means that staff support young people to understand what is happening in their lives and what might happen next. One young person said: 'I would like to live at home, but understand why I cannot'.

All young people are registered with primary health services and staff support young people to attend routine appointments. Young people access specialist support to educate them about the dangers of drug misuse and for some this has helped them to reduce their cannabis use. Although all young people have an annual health assessment, staff do not always act on all the recommendations raised. As a result, two young people have yet to receive some immunisations. This means that all aspects of young people's health are not fully promoted.

Staff support and encourage young people to develop some skills which will assist their transition to adult life. One young person said: 'They [staff] have taught me how to make my own health appointments, which I do now. I know how to cook and do my own laundry.' Staff do not target all independence work to meet young people's individual needs. Managers acknowledge that staff are not equipped with up-to-date knowledge to impart to young people and so information around budgeting is not delivered in a meaningful way. Consequently, preparations for those young people who are due to move on soon could be improved upon and this is an area identified for development.

Young people arrive at the home disengaged from education but, with the support of staff, they go on to make significant progress with their learning. Bespoke packages of education reignite young people's interest. Attendance and levels of engagement improve considerably, for most young people, and two even participated in summer school events to further their development. Young people excel at vocational courses such as painting and decorating, mechanics and plastering, and new talents are realised and nurtured. One young person said, 'The best thing that has happened is getting my exams', and another young person said, 'They have helped me to get back on track with college and stuff. I did my level 1 at school and so I could go straight on to level 2 at college'. Staff help young people to achieve significantly improved education outcomes, and this enhances their future life chances.

Staff build constructive relationships with young people's families to promote contact. As a result, some young people reconnect with family members and others benefit from improved relationships with those who are important to them.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>All young people feel safe and are safe in this home. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff, feel genuinely cared about and listened to and are confident that any concerns that they have will be addressed. One young person said: 'I don't have any worries, but if I did I would speak to the staff. I have always been able to speak to them.'</p> <p>Young people know how to complain, and they receive a guide to the home that provides them with information about advocacy and children's rights. This means that young people are well informed about how to access support outside of the home.</p> <p>Relevant training equips staff to be clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Managers respond promptly whenever a concern or complaint is raised, and staff spoke confidently to the inspector about the procedure for escalating concerns, should they need to. Good safeguarding processes help to protect young people from harm.</p> <p>Young people rarely go missing, and there has been just one incident since the home was registered. The registered manager demonstrates an excellent understanding of local protocols and so is able to differentiate between young people who are missing and those who are absent without authorisation. When young people are absent, staff follow procedures, relevant people are informed, and staff carry out welfare checks to satisfy themselves that young people are safe and well. A social worker said: 'When X was absent from the home recently, staff were persistent in undertaking checks. I believe that they did and do everything that they can to ensure his welfare when away from the home.'</p> <p>For those young people who are older and spend their free time in the community with friends, staff prepare them well. As a result, staff empower them to take age-appropriate risks for their continued development. Most young people manage independence without incident, and understand how to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>On occasion, one young person does come to the attention of the police because of his behaviour in the community. Although staff work with him to help him understand the consequences of this, at present he is not taking this advice on board. A review is underway to look at what options are available to bring him back on track and to minimise the impact on his future.</p> <p>The approach to behaviour management is balanced and considered. Managers review and revise the consequences that are imposed to ensure that they are meaningful and that they reflect positive changes in young people's behaviour, as</p>	

well as negative ones. Young people receive praise and reward when they get things right, and they respond well to such incentives. Consequently, most are learning to modify aspects of their behaviour that cause concern and are challenging. A social worker said: 'X makes positive choices because he knows what the boundaries and expectations are.'

For most young people, their challenging and risky behaviour is reducing. For example, one young person said: 'Life has improved massively for me. I used to get in trouble with the police a lot. I haven't been since I came here. I wasn't listening to people then, but I am now.' This demonstrates that staff have the capacity to help young people to change their lives for the better, and enable them to make more informed choices about their behaviour.

Individual support plans are in place to minimise the risk of situations escalating, and outline the strategies for staff to follow. Occasionally, when situations escalate, physical intervention is necessary. Five such incidents have occurred since the home was registered. Staff manage these incidents well and the records clearly describe events. Afterwards, young people and some staff have the opportunity to talk through what has happened. This inspection identified that not all staff involved in restraint and witnesses have the opportunity to give their views. The manager now recognises this and will implement a new system to address this.

Staff and young people know and understand the risks within their local community. A safer area risk assessment has been completed and shared with young people. Managers are linked to staff at Network Rail to understand fully the potential risk of a rail track that is situated next to the home. All young people have had a safety briefing about the dangers of this, and educating young people helps to minimise risk.

Sound recruitment and selection procedures ensure a safe and competent workforce. This means that unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people.

Timely health and safety checks take place to ensure that a safe physical environment is maintained. This inspection identified that, although young people participate in regular fire drills, all staff do not. This means that six staff do not have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of fire evacuation procedures since moving to the new premises.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. He holds a level 4 qualification in leadership and management for young people's services. The	

manager was first registered with Ofsted in 2008 and was re-registered in February 2016 when the home moved to new premises.

The registered manager and his deputy organised and managed a seamless move to the new premises, making sure that young people and staff were fully involved in this transition. The ability to manage change successfully demonstrates sound leadership qualities. Young people report positively on the move and say that they are enjoying more spacious accommodation and a bigger garden. A young person said, 'It is a much better living area and I think it is good'.

Managers and staff are child focused and committed to delivering and maintaining high standards of care. The registered manager promotes a clear ethos that is caring, supportive and safe. The home is run in accordance with its statement of purpose and managers, and staff achieve the aims and objectives set out in this document.

The home is well staffed by a stable, motivated, competent and dedicated staff team. This means that young people receive their care from people who know and understand them well.

Managers and staff develop effective partnerships with other professional agencies to meet the specific needs of young people. Placing authority social workers report good communication and high levels of satisfaction with the service. Collaborative working promotes young people's welfare and safety.

Staff receive regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills. Where gaps are highlighted, the registered manager liaises with the organisation's training department to address these. All staff in post on 1 April 2014 have completed the level 3 qualification within the two-year timescale set in the regulations. The manager has recently introduced champions for each of the quality standards set out in the regulations. Consequently, individual staff are developing different areas of responsibility and competence in an effort to improve standards of care for young people continually.

Staff report feeling well supported. They receive regular supervision which they say is useful and helps them to reflect on their practice. Six-monthly performance reviews ensure that staff development remains a key focus. One member of staff said: 'I feel I have a fantastic professional relationship with my line manager, who I feel always supports me.'

Leaders and managers track young people's progress in relation to their plans. A recently introduced outcomes tracking tool enables managers to assess young people's progress from their starting points and identify areas where they need more targeted support. This new initiative demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for young people.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the service, and does highlight areas for development. He regularly reviews the home's development plan, ensuring that those areas identified for improvement are addressed in a timely way. Largely effective systems are in place for monitoring the activities of the home to improve the standard and quality of young people's care.

The quality of recording is variable. Some records are comprehensive and clear, whereas others lack sufficient detail to give a clear overview of events. Records of key-working sessions and daily records are particularly brief. Furthermore, some young people's placement plans do not contain current information throughout, and this can be misleading for the reader. A recommendation is raised to improve practice in this area so that good record keeping mirrors the good practice employed by staff.

Not all significant incidents are notified to Ofsted. As a result, the regulator is not kept informed and this does not fully promote young people's welfare.

Six recommendations are raised following this inspection, to secure improvement.

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

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