

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/09/2016
Unique reference number	1212094
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	Louise Whitby
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Elaine Clare

Inspection date	27/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
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	Requires improvement

1212094

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people enjoy individualised care and support and make good progress during their time in the home. The approach to care ensures that young people understand what is expected of them and the responses that they can expect when they are upset or in crisis.
- Engagement in education increases during placement, particularly for those who have not been in formal education for significant periods. Some have recently taken exams and are engaged in their post-16 education.
- Joint working is a key strength. The home has positive relationships with education, therapists and external advocacy services, among others, in order to provide a holistic approach to care. Additionally, joint strategies between the home and the local police can help to locate young people when they are missing.
- Staff support young people's friendships in the community. They are proactive in organising home- or community-based meetings if friends' homes are not deemed appropriate or they want to spend time in each other's company in a safe environment.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered person/s meet/s 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
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27(1)(a))	01/12/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff know how to respond to strategies agreed between young people and their individual therapists, particularly in relation to smoking cannabis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and implement the behaviour management policy, describing the home's approach to promoting positive behaviour and the measures of control, restraint and discipline that may be used in the home. These measures should be seen as part of the overall strategy for behaviour and relationship management in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 36, paragraph 8.14)
- The registered person must supply to Ofsted a copy of reports produced from monitoring, within 28 days of completion, and make copies available to placing authorities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 55, paragraph 15.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate up to four children, irrespective of gender, aged 10 to 17 years old. The home specialises in the care of children who present with emotional and/or behavioural problems. It is operated by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2016	CH - Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, who have a clear understanding of each individual's needs. They are more positive about the home and enjoy living here. The majority of staff challenge young people appropriately, but also provide them with unconditional support to progress in their lives. Young people approach staff with queries, worries or concerns and benefit from frank and open discussions. Observed topics included friendships, relationships and family contact, alongside general interest and interaction at the dining table.</p> <p>Young people benefit from care that is designed to meet their individual needs. Staff liaise with education staff at the local college and with professionals, including the social workers, to develop comprehensive care plans, which focus on individual culture and identity. Staff generally ensure consistency in approach and purposeful target setting through liaison with social workers. Corresponding plans are updated in line with reviews and changes in behaviour. Young people are encouraged to share their views at reviews, which are young person centred.</p> <p>Young people of compulsory education age attend a local community college. Many have struggled to attend school prior to their placement, often not engaging for several months. Staff have, with perseverance and skill, motivated young people to attend as programmed. This has resulted in their progressing in line with their peers. Young people have gained recognised qualifications in various subjects. They are ambitious about their futures and are working hard towards their goals.</p> <p>In addition to formal education, individuals are engaged in a variety of socially and emotionally stimulating activities. While most have chosen not to attend organised clubs or events, they go shopping with staff, complete cooking sessions together and attend a local gym. They are happy with the activities on offer and particularly enjoyed the spa break weekend in the summer holidays.</p> <p>Young people are helped to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Staff promote a balanced diet and healthy eating and encourage individuals to exercise. Smoking cigarettes and cannabis is discouraged, although young people are not currently motivated to stop. Young people have the opportunity to attend individual therapy sessions with specialist drug workers, and staff have regular therapeutic consultations to provide consistency. However, staff are not always consistent in their response to young people smoking, particular in their own bedrooms. For example, some staff issue a consequence while other staff accept that their actions are poor, but do little about it.</p> <p>Contact with friends and families is supported by staff. Staff are thoughtful in their approach to individuals meeting friends, recognising that family homes may not be</p>	

suitable. Arrangements are made to meet in neutral locations or at the children's home, to ensure that friendships can be maintained. Staff facilitate young people to maintain family contact, often encouraging them to use public bus services directly to their college. They also have a good understanding of the impact that visits may have on individuals.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people say that they feel safe in the home and know that staff care about their welfare and well-being. They identify staff in the home whom they would go to if they were worried or upset, although they do not always manage to do this and, consequently, use illicit substances to help them. Staff understand each individual's vulnerabilities and do all they can to keep them safe. They are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare.</p> <p>Young people go missing from the home on occasion. Responses to incidents are robust, with staff following individuals, looking for them in known locations or attempting to contact them by mobile phone. The protocols for the local authorities that have young people placed are available in the home. Staff have strong links with the local police and parents or carers of friends. For example, they have contacts with a foster family and have agreed protocols should a specific young person arrive there without staff dropping them off or contacting them first or, similarly, should they leave without staff collecting them. This joint working extends to the police discussing the risks of being missing with the young person and alerting the home to any inappropriate friendships they may have. High-risk strategy meetings are convened to discuss how to protect young people who are missing on a regular basis. When young people have been missing, they are welcomed back to the home by staff and meet with an external charity worker to explore safety. Young people, as needed, have access to external advocates, to further consider the reasons they may go missing and ways in which they could improve their situation.</p> <p>When deemed appropriate, young people are spoken with by staff, to consider inappropriate behaviour and the risks they may be vulnerable to. An example of this is a young person discussing with staff the risks that they place themselves in when missing, how they can form appropriate relationships and which relationships</p>	

could be exploitative.

The smoking of cannabis has reduced dramatically in all the young people while they are living in the home. Young people who continue to smoke cannabis are supported by staff to reduce, with a plan to eventually stop. Joint working with therapists and mental health professionals has ensured that young people gain other coping strategies and that staff respond in a manner that best helps them.

Behaviour management is well planned, but is not always consistently applied. Restraint is now rarely used and, if used, it is usually to guide young people away from situations. Some home rules need to be reviewed to determine whether they remain appropriate for the current group living in the home, for example the routine locking of the lounge door at night.

Bullying is not outwardly raised as an issue, although staff tackle dominant personalities and relationships in the home on a regular basis in house meetings. Young people's meetings are also used to discuss e-safety.

Young people are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with their abilities. This includes time in the community, using public transport and using the cooking facilities in the home to make meals and snacks. The home is physically safe, and there are regular checks on fire-detection equipment. Recruitment procedures are robust, including pre-employment checks.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement
<p>The home currently does not have a registered manager in post. The registered manager resigned from the role to take up another opportunity within the organisation. A new manager was appointed. She did not register with Ofsted and has subsequently resigned. An experienced interim manager has been appointed, and shortlisting for a new permanent manager is underway. The interim manager has relevant experience and is appropriately qualified for the role. During this period, the registered individual has been supporting the running of the home.</p> <p>Most aspects of the home are well run. Young people are at the centre of all plans, and staff are confident in their roles. Despite this, some decisions made by staff are not consistent with the team agreements or the home's ethos. Staff say that they support each other well and work together as a team. They all receive regular</p>	

supervision that provides sufficient challenge in order to improve practice. Appraisals are up to date and identify training for the forthcoming year.

Reports from independent monitoring visits in relation to regulation 44 are good and provide an adequate overview of the current service and young people's progress, but improvements could be made to provide a more critical oversight. Reports are not always forwarded to Ofsted in a timely manner. For example, a visit undertaken on 28 May 2016 was made available to Ofsted on 5 August 2016. This delay fails to allow a timely scrutiny of the operation of the home by the regulator.

Young people's comprehensive care plans are combined with risk assessments, providing a combined document, which is easy to understand and implement. They demonstrate sound joint working with partner agencies, to ensure consistency in the approach to care.

The requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection have all been acted upon and integrated into daily practice. Incidents and events that require notification have been forwarded to Ofsted and other relevant parties in a timely manner.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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