

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	25/01/2017
Unique reference number	1221357
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Hexagon Care Services Limited
Registered provider address	Hexagon Care Services, 1 Tustin Court, Port Way, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual	Jeanette Swift
Registered manager	Zahra Gibrail
Inspector	Mandy Williams

Inspection date	25/01/2017
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	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

1221357

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Warm and respectful relationships are evident between staff and young people.
- Staff have a good understanding of young people's backgrounds and the impact that these may have on their presentation.
- Staff demonstrate that they really care for young people and they are good advocates for them.
- Young people are investing in the home and learning to keep themselves safe.
- Young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce, following their admission to the home.
- Young people are starting to re-engage with education.
- Staff communication with professionals and young people's families is good. Other agencies are positive about the home.
- The home is a warm and welcoming environment and is furnished to a high standard.
- Young people are well prepared for transition and are learning the skills that they will need when they move on from the home.
- Areas for improvement include management monitoring and auditing, staff vetting processes, staff supervision and training and the agreement of young people's placement plans and risk assessments.

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 persons meet 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>(2)(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>Specifically, they must ensure that care plans and risk assessments are agreed with the placing authority and that the process for staff familiarisation is effective.</p>	03/03/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	03/03/2017
<p>23: Medicines</p> <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling and recording of medicines received into the children's home. The registered person must ensure that medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23(1)((2)(b))</p>	03/03/2017
<p>32: Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety and to ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(3)(d))</p>	03/03/2017
<p>33: Employment of staff</p>	03/03/2017

<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	
<p>37: Other records</p> <p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records listed in Schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(2)(a)(b))</p>	<p>03/03/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff have access to the appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- Ensure that the registered person only accepts placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four female young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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>The home has been operational since June 2016. Some young people moved here with staff they knew from other homes in the organisation. Consequently, at that time, they knew each other well. However, the current staff team is relatively new. Despite this, team members work well together, providing consistent care and clear boundaries for young people.</p> <p>Living in this home has a positive impact on outcomes for young people. They enjoy very positive and respectful relationships with the staff who are caring for them. The staff are good advocates for young people, ensuring that their views are heard. One social worker commented in feedback taken by the home, 'Staff put their hearts into the job and are clearly dedicated.'</p> <p>This consistent care built on positive relationships and the clear boundaries and routines are key to young people investing in the home. They become confident in the standard of care that they can expect to receive. In turn, this reduces their anxiety and they settle into the routines of the home. One placing social worker commented, 'I have found that the staff are able to input clear boundaries while also developing positive relationships with young people. This is a strength of the home.'</p> <p>There has been a change of focus for the home since its registration. Originally, the home functioned as a short-term assessment home. However, it now offers care to female young people on a medium- to long-term basis. All young people living in the home are now placed on this basis. While there are no particular conflicts between young people in placement, the impact risk assessment completed prior to their admission does not indicate that staff actively consider the effect that the placement could have on the existing group of young people. Consequently, it is not clear whether staff have identified any particular area of conflict, or what they have done to alleviate this.</p> <p>Staff are knowledgeable about the histories and needs of those that they care for. All young people benefit from personalised placement plans. These plans outline their needs, routines and plans for the future. However, these plans are not agreed by placing social workers. In addition, it is not clear that all staff in the home are fully aware of the content of the placement plans or that they are made aware of any updates to them in a timely fashion.</p> <p>While not all the young people attend school or college on a full-time basis, their attendance has significantly improved since their placement in the home. Staff promote education and engage young people in conversation about their future career options. This has had a positive impact and has successfully motivated some</p>	

to re-engage. Young people talk positively about their plans for the future. Staff communicate regularly with school and college, so that any issues or barriers to their learning can be shared. Similarly, they share and celebrate their success.

Young people are generally healthy. Staff register them with appropriate health services on their admission to the home. They also provide young people with a range of health-related information, so that they are able to make their own informed choices. While some young people continue to smoke, one has recently stopped smoking with the support of staff. Staff also educate young people about healthy eating and support those who wish to lose weight. These achievements have a positive impact on young people's self-esteem. One young person commented, 'Staff encourage everyone to be healthy, by exercising and eating healthily.' However, medication records do not indicate when a young person has refused to take her prescribed medication and, on occasion, indicate that too much medication has been given. This decision has been made without consultation with a medically qualified professional or a clear understanding of the effect of altering the prescribed dose. Staff have consulted with the young person and her parent, but have not verified this information to ensure the validity of this.

Staff members ensure that young people are able to keep in contact with their families and friends. The staff appreciate the importance of maintaining these relationships and facilitate contact in the home or at alternative venues, whichever is the most suitable for the young person.

Some young people are considering the options available to them when they move on from the home. Some are preparing to live independently in the community. Staff support young people to learn the skills that they will require if they do so. They work through a number of modules on independence, as the young person is approaching transition, so that she has the skills that she will need. One young person commented, 'I know how to cook, clean and also keep myself clean.' Another young person was preparing a meal for everyone during the inspection. Staff hope that these skills will ease their transition. Young people who have moved on from the home remain in touch, demonstrating the positive impact that living in the home has had on them.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement

Young people said that they feel safe living in this home. They believe that staff work hard to keep them safe. One young person commented, 'Staff speak to us and make sure we know the world outside can be dangerous and they like to make sure we are safe.' There has been a reduction in young people's risk-taking behaviours since their admission to the home. For example, there has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents of young people going missing from home. Staff take the appropriate actions to ensure the safe return of young people and work well with the police to expedite this. One young person commented, 'When I go missing, staff will always keep in touch with me.'

Young people said that they would be able to confide in a trusted adult if they had any concerns. They also receive details about agencies that they can contact for support, if they need to, as well as the process for making a complaint, should they wish to make one. However, only one complaint has been made since the home opened. The registered manager dealt with this effectively and promptly. The young person was also provided with information about the outcome.

The rules of the home are clear. Young people know what staff expect of them. Although young people do not always manage to contain their behaviours when they are upset or angry, staff are skilled at de-escalating such situations. Young people are developing their own coping mechanisms and are learning to manage their own behaviour. Consequently, there has only been one incident of physical intervention since the home opened. This was a difficult situation involving a serious assault on a staff member, and, due to the physical environment, staff were unable to use a recognised hold. However, the commissioning of additional training in the home environment, following this event, has allowed staff to reflect and learn from this.

Personalised risk assessments help to inform staff about the specific areas of risk for each young person. However, similarly to young people's placement plans, it is not clear whether these have been agreed by placing social workers or whether staff have been made aware of updates to these important documents. Specific incident details are also missing on occasion. As a result, it is difficult for staff to formulate a clear understanding of the level of risk, and their decision-making may be flawed.

Staff recruitment processes are not yet sufficiently robust to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Inconsistencies in employment dates between an individual's application and dates given by referees have not been identified during the recruitment process. Consequently, there has been no further exploration with the applicant or referee. In addition, references are not routinely taken when an individual has worked with children in a voluntary capacity. Managers do complete risk assessments when it is evident that an individual has criminal convictions. However, on one occasion, an individual has been permitted to work in the home prior to its completion.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>There is a suitably experienced registered manager in charge of the home. She has managed the home since it was registered in June 2016. This is the home’s first inspection. There is a temporary deputy manager at present, who is experienced and able to deputise in the absence of the manager. They both know the young people well and successfully induct new staff into the positive ethos of the home.</p> <p>The home’s statement of purpose reflects the aims and objectives of the home. The registered manager has a development plan, which helps to prioritise developments. However, this does not contain a number of her current priorities, as it is some time since she has updated it. Although internal monitoring reports are completed and sent to Ofsted as required, the standards of monitoring and auditing in the home are weak. For example, the admissions and discharge register contains a number of inaccuracies, and no records had been entered for one young person at all, despite her living in the home for over six weeks. In addition, internal auditing failed to identify many of the issues identified at this inspection.</p> <p>Staff said that they feel supported by managers. However, formal supervision is inadequate and not in line with the organisation’s own policy. Some staff have not received supervision for a long time, and agency staff are not receiving supervision at all. Staff on probation and new to residential work are being supervised infrequently and not at a level to promote their development and enable them to reflect on their practice. Similarly, while the organisation provides staff with a range of training opportunities, these are not always targeted to meet the specific needs of the young people or the home, for example training in managing self-harming behaviour, medication and fire awareness. A number of staff have also yet to complete a level 3 qualification for working with young people.</p> <p>Liaison with other agencies is effective. Positive relationships exist between managers and other professionals. Comments include, ‘We have a very good working relationship. Staff always contact us with any updates’, and ‘The home excels in this area. Communication between themselves and [Name of local authority] is exemplary. They make contact when necessary and are swift to respond to any of my queries.’</p> <p>The home is located in a residential area but close to the town centre, giving easy access to community activities. It is warm, welcoming and furnished to a high standard. Photographs of young people and their artwork are displayed in the</p>	

home. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere in 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance, 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017