

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/02/2017
Unique reference number	1212704
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	Margaret Gill
Inspector	Lisa Gregoire-Parker

Inspection date	22/02/2017
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make excellent progress from the day they arrive and they make significant improvements in all aspects of their lives.
- Young people have very positive relationships with staff and other young people who they live with.
- Young people have excellent relationships with the local community and are actively involved in community events on a regular basis.
- Staff know the young people very well and they support them to develop their individual interests and aspirations. Continuous and dedicated support enhances young people's lives to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- Young people feel happy and safe at the home. They feel that their voices are listened to. Furthermore, they invest in their home and the community in which they live.
- A consistent, nurturing and committed staff team supports young people to learn to manage their own emotions and to make safer choices; thus, risk-taking behaviours reduce considerably.
- Young people fully engage with education. They are making exceptional progress in their learning.
- Staff communicate very effectively with family members and support young people to have regular contact with their family and friends.
- Staff work very well with other agencies and communication is excellent. Other agencies are extremely positive about the home.
- Staff advocate on behalf of young people and secure the required services to meet their needs.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>13: Leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person should demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of the children are best met. (Regulation 13 (2)(g)(i)) Specifically, that staff have the required knowledge base to inform practice relating to eating disorders.</p>	07/04/17
<p>10: Health and well-being standard</p> <p>In order to meet the health and well-being standard, the registered person should ensure that the health and well-being outcomes are clearly recorded in the child's relevant plan. (Regulation 10 (2)(a)(i)) In particular, that young people's substance misuse is clearly recorded in the child's assessments and plans.</p>	07/04/17
<p>12: Protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person is to ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (2)(d)) Specifically, ensure that hazards are assessed and responded to in a timely way and that clear plans are put in place to reduce any risks to a child's health.</p>	07/04/17

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private organisation. The registration allows the provider to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A first inspection following registration		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
<p>This is the first full inspection since the home was re-registered in September 2016.</p> <p>Young people make extremely positive progress living in this home. They receive individual care that reflects their needs. Young people receive the encouragement they need to identify their own individual interests and staff support them to develop these further. Young people have positive relationships with staff. Young people report that they get on very well as a group and it is evident that they are supportive of each other. When young people first arrived at the home, they had very low educational attendance and attainment. Young people have access to full-time education and they now all have 100% attendance. Young people enjoy education and they speak very positively about it. They are working towards good educational outcomes and they aspire to achieve their goals. Those young people that are due to take their GCSEs attend a revision class that has been put in place for them. One parent said that, 'School is brilliant at [name of home] and that [name of young person] is doing better here than she has ever done at school.'</p> <p>The home is warm, calm and inviting and it is reflective of the young people living there. Young people are encouraged to personalise their home and there are pictures on the walls that show young people undertaking a variety of activities with staff. Culturally, young people have the opportunity to explore cultures and beliefs that they are not familiar with. For example, they had recently visited a Buddhist temple and said how they had really enjoyed this experience.</p> <p>Young people benefit from clear routines and boundaries, which have a positive impact on their development and progress. Young people are involved in the running of the home and they have regular young people's meetings, where they discuss issues and agree actions, which progress in a timely way. Young people are involved in developing the weekly menus, they assist with the food shop, and they prepare and cook food. They are encouraged to keep their home clean and tidy; for example, the young people do their own laundry, and help staff clear the table and wash and dry dishes after meals. Young people eat healthy meals and have an active healthy lifestyle. They access a range of exercise classes in the local community and report how they enjoy these. One young person recently ran in a 10-kilometre run with a member of the staff team. The young person says that this was a great achievement for her and she has registered to run in another race soon.</p> <p>Young people are actively encouraged to integrate into the local community. Young people have good relationships with members of the community and they regularly take part in fund-raising events. All young people volunteer and participate in</p>	

charity work in the community and the three young people who are old enough to work have part-time jobs with local businesses. Young people have the guidance to develop their independence skills, which affords them the opportunity to enhance their personal skills and grow in confidence.

Young people receive the support they need to understand and manage their own risk-taking behaviour, which enables them to make safer decisions. For example, missing from home was a key risk indicator for all young people that live here when they arrived. Through a nurturing and consistent approach, there has been a considerable reduction in these occurrences. When incidents have occurred, staff have been committed to understanding why a young person has gone missing and, in doing so, they have been able to put the required safety measures in place, while also supporting the young person to make safer choices.

Young people receive support to access the services that will assist them in meeting their identified needs. Staff liaise with other agencies well and feedback from them is extremely positive. A social worker commented that the home had been 'outstanding in the care that they are providing for [name of young person] and that she is thriving'. The social worker went on to say that the home was 'proactive in meeting the needs of [name of young person], she is happy with the placement and that it is one of the best she has come across.' Another social worker said that '[name of the home] relationship with my young person is caring, professional, consistent and supportive.'

Young people have regular contact with their family. Where there are challenges with this, the manager and staff work together with the social worker to promote contact and seek ways to manage this safely. Young people are encouraged and supported to have relationships with positive established friends from their home areas. This supports young people to maintain childhood friendships and develop their independence.

The staff team promotes the achievements of the young people. It is evident that young people thrive on this and this encourages them to try things that they may not have done before. Young people actively seek opportunities to improve their outcomes by trying new experiences. They have a desire to reach their goals and achieve good outcomes.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people who live at the home are safe. Staff are very calm and caring in their approach and young people respond well to this. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities to keep young people safe. Young people get on well together and they support each other to make safer choices. There is a real sense of care and support throughout and young people are responding positively to this supportive environment. As a result, risk-taking behaviours considerably reduce and young people become content and settled. One parent commented that '[name of young person] did amazing settling in to [name of home].' Regular key working sessions are undertaken with the young people. This supports them to learn about their risk-taking behaviours and the influences associated with them. Furthermore, it enables them in making safe informed decisions.</p> <p>The home is generally well maintained. However, there is a considerable amount of mould on the young people's bedroom windows. The manager reports that this was assessed and that there was no health risk identified. However, there is no report to support this assessment and subsequent conclusion. This could pose a health risk to young people, particularly as one of the young people suffers from asthma.</p> <p>Young people's risk assessment plans are clear and easy to follow. However, risks are not always clearly identified in the relevant plans. In some cases, they are not identified at all. For example, young people's risk assessments and plans did not identify that they smoke cigarettes. Furthermore, it was not clear what plans were in place to manage this health risk. There is an over reliance on handover books and staff communication to manage some risk-taking behaviours, which is not robust enough. For example, a young person is displaying behaviours that are associated with an eating disorder. The manager and staff are currently working with specialist professionals to support the young person and provide the help that she needs. There are, therefore, measures in place to keep the young person safe. However, the relevant assessments and plans do not reflect this.</p> <p>Staff and young people are clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Young people respect this. Staff receive training on behaviour management and the safe use of restraint. Staff are able to respond quickly to issues that arise and, subsequently, staff manage and deescalate incidents effectively with minimal need for physical restraint.</p> <p>The home has good links and very positive relationships with other agencies. This supports the help that young people need to achieve good outcomes. Staff actively seek support for young people from specialist agencies when required. The recruitment and selection of staff is sufficiently robust. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify the identity of visitors to protect young people. Health and safety checks are completed and these ensure a safe living environment. The</p>	

community risk assessments are individualised and they clearly identify the risks and the safety measures in place to keep young people safe in their local community. However, the information within the placement plans, and the risk assessments and plan, does not always reflect the information within the community risk assessment. The conflicting information can be confusing.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager has been in post at this home since its registration in September 2016. Prior to this, she was the registered manager for the home where all the young people resided. Therefore, the young people have benefited from a consistent manager. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. An experienced deputy manager supports the manager to effectively run the home in line with the aims and ethos of the statement of purpose. Staff are suitably qualified or working towards this. The staff team is well established and a number of the team members have worked with the manager and deputy manager for a number of years. The young people clearly benefit from this consistent staff team.</p> <p>Staff say that their line manager supports them and that they are encouraged to take on new responsibilities so that they can develop their knowledge and skills further. Staff receive regular supervision that is reflective in nature. Staff are encouraged to explore their practice and learn from their experiences. They are challenged constructively; this offers them insight into their practice, and how this may affect young people and in what areas they need to develop further. Staff training is available and the training matrix is clear. While the organisation provides opportunities for training, the current training available is not targeted to meet the specific needs of young people; for example, training on eating disorders is not provided. Consequently, staff are not equipped with the knowledge they need to identify early indicators of these developing behaviours and ways to manage these effectively.</p> <p>All staff that work with young people have a clear understanding of the needs of young people. Staff work effectively together to ensure that young people receive consistent positive messages. This is particularly evident in the day-to-day practice and, indeed, in the key working sessions. This is a particular strength of the home and young people are clearly responding to these reinforced positive messages. Young people receive continuous praise on their achievements and they obtain rewards for positive behaviour. They are able to earn incentive points for fulfilling individual targets, which are converted to agreed rewards. Young people are motivated by this award system.</p>	

The internal and external monitoring of the home is completed as required. The manager has quality assurance practices in place, which overall are effective. However, the manager's internal monitoring had failed to identify the omissions and discrepancies in the young people's assessments and plans. The manager and the wider management team have awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The registered manager has recently introduced a team leader meeting, which is proving to be valuable. Within this, care planning had been identified as an area for improvement and appropriate action is being taken to improve this area of practice. This area for development was reflected in the inspection findings. This provides evidence that managers and team leaders have insight into the areas of practice that need further attention.

There is a clear and measured development plan in place, which is very young person focused. Weaved throughout the plan is a workforce development plan, which highlights the training needs of the staff. The plan has been informed by consultation with young people; for example, young people requested that workstations were put in their bedrooms. This was completed within the agreed timeframes. The plan also identified key partnership arrangements and the positive impact that these have on the outcomes for young people. A building improvement plan is also in place and complements the development plan.

Liaison with other agencies is very effective. Social workers speak extremely positively about staff communication. They are readily kept up to date with the progress of young people and any incidents are reported in a timely way. A social worker commented that, 'Communication is excellent and we are consulted on matters that occur that need attention and decisions to be made.' This supports consistent care and messages for young people. The police also report that they have a very good working relationship with the home, which strengthens effective safeguarding arrangements for young people.

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 the '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 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 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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