

1212094

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **Good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The senior leadership team has invested time and passion to develop the children's home. The manager is particularly enthusiastic and child-centred. An

ethos of continuous learning and reflection underpins improvements.

- Staff are nurturing of young people and develop good relationships. They create calm and relaxed environments in which the young people feel safe. Close liaison with social workers and parents enables staff to work with them to support young people to progress in all areas, including social presentation, self-care and independence skills.
- Staff give young people's education a high priority and address any barriers effectively. Consequently, young people engage well in education and obtain a lot from it.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The grounds to the home are currently overgrown and underused. They could provide a valuable outdoor space to learn, reflect and play in.
- The organisation's policy is to have prescribed homely remedies, for example paracetamol. Consideration should be given to buying these items over the counter.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2016	Full	Good
02/08/2016	Full	Inadequate

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

Recommendations

- Records should be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused, with particular regard to the reasons why paracetamol is issued. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 7.17)
- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 25, paragraph 5.20)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has experienced a period of stability since the last inspection. Young people receive good-quality, individualised care, which is responsive to their needs. Care is provided by consistent staff who are appropriately skilled and experienced. This supports young people to develop secure, trusting relationships with them. Overall, young people are making good progress from their starting points.

The majority of young people are engaged in education or training, tailored to their individual needs. For one young person, an education placement is being sorted. The registered manager has challenged the local authority to prioritise an education provision. Staff are ambitious for young people and support their educational progress and attainment. This is currently being done, temporarily, in-house by the staff. However, the home does not have a computer for young people to work from and so they rely on workbooks. This provides limited stimulus compared to interactive education programmes that can be found on the internet. A recommendation has been made to address this. A strength of the home is how staff support young people to be central to their own plans. They are encouraged to be aspirational, then supported through taking small steps to achieve their goals

One social worker commented that she was really pleased with the progress her young person is making after a number of placement moves before coming to this home. She added, 'Staff communicate well with me. They tell me about her progress, not just the problems.' One young person said she 'enjoyed taking baths and baking'.

Staff use incentives to support progress across a number of areas, such as keeping bedrooms tidy, maintaining school attendance and getting involved in tasks in the home to promote independent living skills. They are also used to keeping young people safe and helping them to make safer choices. Incentive planning is completely individualised

and provides a mechanism for staff and young people to agree goals and areas to work on.

A very positive aspect of the care provided is the increase in young people's self-esteem and confidence, and the capacity of young people to regulate their emotions. One social worker said, 'The home has engaged (name) in a number of activities and the most recent one is boxing, which in my view helps her with discipline, which the child lacked before coming into care.' This increased confidence has supported young people in being able to maintain positive relationships.

A staff member commented upon her key child having made good progress in the home, saying, 'She has matured an awful lot and I can really see this lately. She gets on so well with all the staff and she knows we care for her and keep her safe.'

Parents and placing authorities speak very positively about staff working in partnership with parents and supporting contact arrangements where appropriate. Staff send social workers weekly updates, sharing achievements as well as any issues for the young person.

Staff respect and value family relationships and understand the significance of these for young people. Staff work with young people and families to support positive contact and to improve difficult relationships where possible. Staff speak warmly and positively about young people and demonstrate skill and experience in meeting their needs.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people invariably come to the home deemed to be at high risk of harm or having suffered significant harm. For the majority of young people, within a short period of time the risk posed to them is reduced. The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people.

The home has a location risk assessment, which details any risks specific to the home's location, including the physical environment, access to transport links and any known risks in the community.

Staff help and protect young people through the implementation of risk and behaviour management plans. They try to gather as much information as possible about potential risks and vulnerabilities prior to a young person's admission and continue to work with placing authorities to review and amend risk assessments on a regular basis. Young people's files are well maintained, with staff taking steps to ensure that all necessary information is present. Having full and detailed information facilitates a better understanding of the young person's risks, vulnerabilities and strengths.

Young people feel safe in the home. Regular consultation with young people, parents and professionals provides the opportunity for senior staff to review progress. Young people meet on a weekly basis to talk about the home and any issues they may have.

Bullying is not an issue in the home currently. Young people have been carefully matched to reduce their impact upon each other. Matching has been problematic in the

past, but staff have worked effectively with young people to help them manage their own behaviour. Staff have access to clinical support through consultation with community health professionals. This enables staff to improve their understanding of the emotions being expressed through behaviour and employ different strategies to support young people.

The home employs a positive behaviour management strategy, using incentives to reward positive behaviour. Staff have only had to use low-level physical intervention to manage behaviour. They are skilled in using a range of de-escalation techniques to manage challenging behaviour and these are working well. Staff are usually able to recognise triggers for challenging behaviour. The incentive system is sometimes used in working with young people and agreeing strategies to keep safe. A strength of the home is acknowledging that young people will sometimes make unsafe decisions, but this is a point of learning for young people and staff and does not need to escalate into a cycle of negative behaviour.

Risk to young people is understood. Young people have free time and access to the internet, but these activities are risk-assessed and managed accordingly. One social worker said, 'I feel (the home) have been very welcoming to (name) and they have been flexible as she comes with quite a lot of free time and trust currently that she had built up in her previous placement. I think it is a positive that they facilitated this continuing, as it has helped her not to feel disheartened through her emergency placement, which is quite far away from her home area.'

Staff are realistic about young people becoming increasingly independent. They try to support safe internet use, for example, rather than prohibiting it, but acknowledge that sometimes prohibiting activities completely is necessary to safeguard young people. Staff keep a clear log of all safeguarding concerns, accidents and incidents.

Incidents of missing from care are managed well, with staff following multi-agency guidance to support the young person's safe return. Staff understand the importance of young people having the opportunity to speak to someone independent of the home upon their return. Independent return interviews are generally well documented.

Staff have access to a broad range of training opportunities, some delivered online and others delivered via more traditional group events. Informal opportunities for staff development also take place during team meetings. These enable managers to identify areas for development and training, which might sit outside prescribed mandatory training and refresher courses. There is good evidence of staff appraisal and training. Managers are confident that staff have appropriate awareness of safeguarding procedures.

Medication practices are appropriate, but a minor error was found in the recording template used. Staff were not recording the reason why paracetamol was being given. A recommendation has been made to address this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is appropriately skilled and experienced. She is working

towards the level 5 diploma management qualification. Staffing has largely been stable since the last full inspection, providing young people with consistent and dependable care.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision. This is recorded well and provides the opportunity for reflective and task-orientated discussion. Appraisal processes are effective, with staff receiving appropriate support and challenge.

The registered manager has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses within the home. She shows a great deal of understanding regarding the skills within the staff team and the ethos she is trying to create. Young people are at the centre of the work, and staff value and respect young people as individuals. The registered manager utilises a range of processes to monitor the quality of care provided. This includes responding constructively to any recommendations made through external monitoring of the home, as well as having robust internal monitoring systems.

Senior staff each have an area of responsibility and report to the manager. This enables the registered manager to measure the progress and experience of young people.

Consultation takes place regularly and concerns all stakeholders, including staff. The registered manager is beginning to evaluate this information so that it can shape how the home develops.

Evidencing the progress young people make is an area of development for the team, but the staff have a very clear view that positive progress comes from young people being able to visualise what they want and 'buying-in' to their plans. Case records and plans reflect this to a degree.

Staff work effectively with placing authorities and other professionals. One social worker said, 'the home has been efficient in their paperwork and sharing information with myself.' On occasion, the registered manager has challenged other professionals, for example in care planning decisions, or when the required documentation has not been forwarded to the home. The registered manager and team also welcome, and are open to, professional challenge in order to review the care they provide.

The home is in a good state of repair and presents as a welcoming, child-centred home. There are no obvious signs of wear and tear, and the ground floor in particular looks well presented. Young people have good-sized bedrooms, which they decorate to their taste, reflecting their individual style.

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the home, and provides an accurate description of the service provided.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1212094

Provision sub-type: 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: Louise Whitby

Registered manager: Joanne Abram

Inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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