

# 1236771

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides short-term care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The primary purpose of the service is to assess if young people can return to the care of their families.

**Inspection dates:** 4 to 5 October 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:** 14 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make progress in important areas of their lives. This is as a result of the staff's consistent care, effective routines and clear boundaries.
- Partnership working between young people, staff, parents and other professionals is helping young people to return home to their families or move on to suitable placements, such as foster care, independent living or long-term residential care.
- Staff ensure that young people keep in touch with their families and that safe and supportive arrangements are in place to make this a positive experience for all.
- Staff listen to young people and work hard to nurture warm, trusting relationships within the home.
- Young people's risk-taking behaviour decreases as they settle into their home and begin to accept staff's consistent support and guidance.
- A caring and competent management team effectively leads the home. Young people's needs, welfare and safety are the team's priority.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Planning for young people's education.
- Behaviour management strategies.
- Staff training.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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

### Recommendations

- Local authorities have a duty under section 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, which includes, as set out in guidance, seeking a school or other education setting that is best suited to the child's needs. The local authorities' responsibilities as corporate parent apply wherever the child is placed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.5)

In particular, ensuring that suitable education arrangements are in place for every young person living at the home.

- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)

In particular, implementing a restorative approach to behaviour management.

- The registered person should ensure that all staff can access appropriate training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, ensure that all staff have access to training, including casual staff, and refresher training is provided within the timescales set by the organisation.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff's intense care and support are helping young people to make progress in important areas of their lives. This short-term assessment service has enabled some young people to return home to the care of their families. When this has not been possible, they have helped young people to move successfully on to foster care, semi-independence or permanent residential care.

Young people benefit from having increased contact with their families because staff work closely with social workers, parents and relatives to ensure that arrangements are safe and meet the young person's needs.

Staff understand how important education is to young people's development and work tirelessly to improve young people's opportunities to learn. The home has established good links with local alternative schools to ensure that young people have access to education from the start of their placement. Furthermore, through regular key-work discussions and incentives, staff encourage young people to re-engage with their

learning by helping them to understand the benefits of education. However, despite staff's efforts to arrange suitable provision for young people, on one occasion a placing authority changed a young person's education plan from attending formal education at a school to home tuition. This had a negative impact on the young person's learning because they struggled to concentrate at home. The manager acknowledges that in future she will need to ensure that the placing authority has suitable contingency plans in place from the start of each young person's placement.

Young people benefit from learning new skills, such as cooking and keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy. Observations of young people during the inspection demonstrated their ability to help prepare evening meals, bake pies and clean their dishes. Furthermore, weekly young people's meetings not only ensure that young people are involved in planning their weekly meals, they also provide young people and staff with the opportunity to get together and discuss the home's routines and expectations.

Staff work hard to promote healthy living in the home. This includes persistently discouraging unhealthy habits, such as smoking. Not only do staff provide young people with information about support services that can help them to give up smoking, they also enforce the home's no smoking policy by having consistent boundaries in place and consequences for when young people refuse to comply. One young person proudly reported that he has managed to reduce the number of cigarettes that he smokes each day.

Staff attend to young people's health needs well. They have helped young people to understand how important it is to attend routine health checks such as the dentist. With staff support and encouragement, young people, who refused to attend the dentist because of their fears, have visited the dentist and received the treatment that they need.

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

The home has experienced a difficult period where young people were potentially placing each other at significant harm. However, the manager took immediate action to minimise risk. This included increasing staffing levels, having arrangements in place to separate young people and putting new referrals to the home on hold. At the time of the inspection, the home was caring for two young people only. These effective measures have helped staff to restore stability and enhance safety within the home.

Young people are safer since they moved into the home. Incidents of going missing from home have significantly decreased for some young people. Likewise, offending behaviour, misuse of drugs and alcohol and other associated risks, such as child and criminal exploitation, have reduced. Staff are alert to potential risks and dangers because they receive training in a variety of safeguarding matters. Furthermore, staff follow comprehensive risk assessments that clearly outline each young person's individual vulnerabilities and set out effective strategies to tackle risk and minimise harm.

Staff support young people to reflect on their behaviour during regular key-work and life

space sessions. Young people therefore benefit from having a trusted adult to confide in and learn from. This is reflected in a young person's comments, 'I can relate to most of the staff. (Staff name) is professional and he calms me down when I kick off. (Staff name) teaches me stuff. (Staff name) is like an uncle or a dad.' Young people benefit from the ongoing support of a consistent team that genuinely cares about their safety and welfare.

Staff are trained to de-escalate challenging situations and they promote positive behaviour through constant praise and incentives. At times, staff impose sanctions to teach young people that there are consequences to unacceptable behaviour. Often, the sanctions used by staff are monetary based, which has not always had the anticipated effect, to deter the behaviour and prevent reoccurrence. The manager acknowledges this and intends to introduce a restorative approach to behaviour management.

Robust recruitment practice that checks all staff's suitability before they start working at the home enhances young people's safety. Additionally, an efficient maintenance system ensures that any damage to the home is quickly repaired to prevent any potential hazards and/or accidents from occurring. Likewise, an updated and detailed local area assessment, coupled with regular health and safety checks, such as equipment servicing and testing of fire alarms, is improving young people's safety within the home and the community.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager resigned in June 2017. A new manager was appointed and her application to register with Ofsted is progressing. The manager has worked in children's residential services for 18 years, of which four years have involved a management role. She has not yet acquired the required management qualification. However, she has enrolled on to the relevant course and she expects to complete this by March 2018.

A suitably experienced and qualified deputy manager supports the manager with the daily running of the home. Likewise, the responsible individual provides regular support and guidance to the manager and is actively involved in the monitoring of the service. This strong leadership team, coupled with a stable staff team, has ensured that the required improvements identified at the last inspection have been made. Young people are, therefore, safer and they benefit from an improved standard of care. Without a doubt, young people's welfare is at the centre of the team's practice and young people's needs are clearly the manager's priority. The action taken by the manager to restore stability in the home, which included placing new referrals on hold and putting children's welfare and safety first, clearly demonstrates this.

The manager and staff receive regular professional supervision that centres on each young person's needs and areas of development for staff. Staff feel supported in their roles and new staff benefit from a comprehensive induction programme and more frequent professional supervision. Although the organisation provides a varied training programme, including safeguarding, training around child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, some staff have not received refresher training within the period set out in

the company's training plan. Furthermore, casual staff do not have access to all training courses.

The service has established good networks and relationships with a range of agencies and professionals responsible for meeting the needs of the young people. Staff work closely with social workers, health professionals and leading safeguarding agencies. This effective joint working is ensuring that young people make continued progress and are safe.

The manager ensures that staff are involved in the monitoring of the service. Regular team meetings provide staff with opportunities to influence service development, share learning and reflect on their practice. Consequently, the team feels valued, respected and well supported.

The home continues to develop and improve through effective internal and external monitoring systems. The manager and the team are reflective practitioners and have aspirations for the service and the young people in their care. The manager has regular consultations with young people, parents and other stakeholders to ascertain their views on the service and their suggestions for areas to develop. Consequently, the team demonstrates enthusiasm and capacity to continue to improve the home, young people's outcomes and their life experiences.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** 1236771

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Hexagon Care Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Unit 1 Tustin Court, Riversway, Preston PR2 2YQ

**Responsible individual:** Louise Whitby

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector(s)

Marina Tully: social care inspector

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