

1212704

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This 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 who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 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: 22 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make good progress living here. They speak positively about their experiences and achievements.

- Young people quickly develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. This enables young people to feel safe and cared for.
- Young people receive individual care that reflects their needs. Staff know young people well.
- Young people receive support to access a broad spectrum of specialist services that meet their identified needs.
- Staff are proactive in seeking advice and guidance from other professionals, and they put this into practice.
- Young people have access to full-time education on site and they engage with this well. The progress that young people are making in education is fantastic.
- Young people have regular contact with their families. This progresses from supervised contact to unsupervised overnight stays.
- Young people are safe and they know that staff care about them. Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach and young people respond well to this.
- Staff manage safeguarding concerns effectively. They follow procedures well and ensure that all relevant people have the required information in a timely way.
- The registered manager and the deputy manager work well together. They provide good leadership and are committed and passionate.
- Staff work well with other agencies and communication is very good. Other agencies are positive about the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people's impact risk assessments are not robust enough.
- Young people's risk assessments and plans are not always clear.
- Staffing levels are not consistently good enough.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

22/02/2017

Full

Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to 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 person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home;</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that there are arrangements in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, that all young people's needs are fully assessed and considered when placing new young people in the home.</p>	29/11/2017
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which –</p> <p>are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording that is not ambiguous.</p>	29/11/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and make sure that the plans in place to manage these risks are clear. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered manager should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Contingency plans should be prepared in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15 and 10.18) In particular, staffing levels should form part of any management decisions that may impact on staff retention and morale.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress living here. They speak positively about their experiences and achievements. One parent said, 'I think [name of the young person] has changed in a positive way due to being cared for by the home.'

The home is welcoming and homely and a nurturing environment which seeks to support young people to achieve positive outcomes. The home is very much a reflection of the young people living here. Many pictures on display show the young people having positive experiences with the other young people and staff. Young people are encouraged to personalise their home and bedrooms. Recent incidents have resulted in young people damaging the home. The home ensures that repairs are carried out in a timely way. Furthermore, staff use restorative approaches to help young people to understand the impact of the damage that they are causing in their home.

The assessment of new referrals is clear. It draws out the subject's risks and needs well and the analysis of the information gathered is good. However, it does not consider the impact that a new placement will have on the young people living there. Nor does it take into account staffing levels and staff resilience. Due to these gaps in assessment and analysis, the impact risk assessment is not robust enough.

Young people quickly develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. This enables young people to feel safe and cared for. Subsequently, they are honest about their wishes and feelings, and share their concerns and worries. Staff are supportive and proactive and act on any information shared in a sensitive and reassuring way. One young person said, 'I never feel that I am on my own dealing with things. They deal with my issues with me. I feel that staff are easy to approach and to talk to about anything'.

Young people receive individual care that reflects their needs and risks. However, staff do not always assess and plan for known risks. The strategies, monitoring and evaluation of these risks are not clear and subsequently young people continue to display these risk-taking behaviours. When staff do assess and plan for presenting risks, young people receive very good help, support and guidance. This enables young people to manage their risk-taking behaviours in a safe and supportive environment. Staff work proactively with young people, their families and the relevant agencies to reduce risk-taking behaviours. For example, young people who experience emotional and mental health difficulties receive support to understand their individual challenges. Furthermore, they have the required specialist support to improve their emotional and mental health.

Young people receive support to access a broad spectrum of specialist services that meet their identified needs. Staff are proactive in seeking advice and guidance from other professionals, and they put this advice into practice. This provides young people with the holistic care that they need. In addition, it allows professional relationships to develop between agencies. Young people benefit from this approach and young people make positive progress.

When young people first arrive at the home, they are not engaged in education. Young people have access to full-time education on site and they engage with this well. The progress that young people are making in education is fantastic. Young people achieve

good GCSE results. This provides them with opportunities and choices about their future careers. Young people secure placements at college and they talk about how they feel proud of their achievements. When young people start to disengage from education, staff work in partnership with the school and encourage young people to re-engage. This has positive results and young people quickly start participating in their education again.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop independence skills. They are empowered to take the lead in their life choices. They receive guidance and support as they move from childhood to adulthood. Young people value this, as it enables them to develop independence in a safe and supportive way. If they make decisions that are not safe, they receive support in exploring the decision and the consequence. Young people are encouraged to take the learning from the experience and develop strategies to help them make safer decisions in the future.

Young people are involved in the running of the home. There are regular and meaningful young people's meetings. Young people are actively involved in developing the weekly menus. They also help to cook meals. Mealtimes are important in the home and staff ensure that these are reflective of day-to-day family life. Culturally, young people have the opportunity to go to church if they want to. One young person likes going to church and they receive support to attend church-related activities, such as craft-making afternoons, which they enjoy.

Young people have recently been on holiday, which they enjoyed. Young people take part in some activities. However, these have become less frequent due to recent challenges in the home. Consequently, young people do not have the same access to activities as they did at the previous inspection. Staff recognise this and are committed to making improvements.

Young people have regular contact with their families. This progresses from supervised contact to unsupervised overnight stays. Young people speak positively about this. Staff support and encourage the relationships between young people and their families. They support young people to develop friendships. When contact arrangements are not working well, staff review these with the social worker and revise them accordingly.

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

Young people are safe and they know that staff care about them. Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach and young people respond well to this. Young people are encouraged to explore their wishes and feelings. They benefit from focused and regular key-working sessions and one-to-one time. Staff complete these to a good standard and follow up on issues that arise. Young people are benefiting from this work and this is evident in the reduction of risk-taking behaviour and the positive progress that they make. However, on occasion staff do not explore risk-taking behaviours with young people. In these instances, young people continue to display the behaviours, and these result in negative choices and outcomes.

Young people's placement plans are written to a good standard and easy to follow. Information is clear and the documents are easy to navigate. They are young person focused and the reader has a good insight into the young person's experience. Risk assessments and plans are good. However, some key risk factors are missing and thus plans and ongoing monitoring are not robust enough. Staff work well with other

agencies to assess and manage risk. They take the lead from specialist professionals and ensure that young people are safe.

Staff manage safeguarding concerns effectively. They follow procedures well and ensure that all relevant people have the required information in a timely way. They provide good support to the young people and show empathy and understanding. This gives young people the reassurance they need to feel safe and supported. On occasion, the safeguarding records are incomplete. Consequently, there are some instances when it is not clear how staff are keeping young people safe.

Staff and young people are clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Young people receive support to take responsibility for their own behaviour and respect the boundaries that are in place. Sanctions are restorative in nature and, in the majority of instances, have the desired outcome. When young people display unacceptable behaviour, staff respond quickly and use de-escalation techniques to defuse the situation. On occasion, staff use physical interventions to defuse and manage incidents. In these instances, staff follow clear policies and procedures and use the accredited techniques in which they have received training. Staff record incidents well. Sometimes staff will request support from the police. This happens when young people and staff are unsafe. In these situations, staff work in partnership with the police to reach an outcome that means all young people and staff are safe. Young people understand this and receive support after incidents to explore the incident and strategies to ensure that young people do not repeat the same behaviours. Similarly, staff receive support and guidance after an incident.

The recruitment and selection of staff are sufficiently robust. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors' identities to protect young people. Health and safety checks are completed and this ensures a safe living environment.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities to keep young people safe. However, staffing levels are not always high enough. In addition, staff are often working many additional hours. Consequently, some situations prove difficult to manage.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post at this home since its registration in September 2016. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. An experienced deputy manager supports the manager. The home runs in line with the aims and ethos of the statement of purpose. The majority of staff are suitably experienced and qualified. Those without qualifications are working towards these.

The registered manager and the deputy manager work well together. They provide good leadership, and are committed and passionate. They have high expectations for the care that young people receive and they lead by example. They know the young people well and the relationships they have with them are good. The young people speak very fondly of them.

A number of staff have left since the last inspection. While some established staff are still in post, it is evident that the changes in staff have had an impact on the team. Furthermore, the reduction in staffing levels has meant that staff often work above their contracted hours. Consequently, staff are tired. The registered manager and deputy manager are also covering shifts. This is having an impact on their capacity to provide

consistent management oversight. Consequently, practice does not benefit from the overview and scrutiny required and case recording is sometimes missing, inaccurate or ambiguous.

The home has an effective external monitoring process. The registered manager finds this process very helpful in the continuous improvement of the home. The manager has an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. It is evident that a reduction in staffing levels and the recent incidents have had an impact on staff morale. Young people also comment on how things have changed in recent months. The registered manager is working together with the responsible individual, the deputy manager and the staff to improve things.

Staff say that their line manager is supportive. Staff receive regular supervision that is reflective and meaningful. However, staff are not getting the opportunity to meet as a team as regularly as they should. Staff have access to the required training and are committed to developing their knowledge and skills. The training is specific to the needs of the young people. This has a positive impact on the way in which staff manage challenging situations and young people are benefiting from new techniques and approaches. For example, staff have a clearer understanding of eating disorders. Consequently, they are empowering young people to develop effective strategies in managing these behaviours.

Liaison with other agencies and parents is good. Staff promote the achievements that young people make and share this with other relevant people. Parents and social workers receive regular updates on the young people's progress. They speak very positively about this. One social worker said that staff are always friendly and keep them updated at all times. A parent said that staff are excellent at keeping them informed. Their words were 'excellent, I take my hat off to them all'.

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: 1212704

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: Hexagon Care, 1 Tustin Court, Ashton-On-Ribble, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Margaret Gill

Inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker, social care inspector

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