

1223501

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 3 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The highly skilled registered manager provides stable and effective leadership

and support to young people and the staff.

- A social worker wrote, 'The staff have always presented as passionate and interested in the children and ensure their wishes and feelings are followed.'
- The staff are exceptional at building trusting relationships with the young people. As a result, young people make considerable and, in some cases, exceptional progress.
- Safeguarding is of the highest level. Outstanding collaboration with a wide range of safeguarding professionals ensures that risky behaviours are extremely well managed.
- The significant progress that young people make in engaging in education and changing their risky behaviours is the result of the effective multi-professional decision-making. Agreed actions are delivered in practice by a determined and committed staff team.
- Supporting young people with family contact is a strength. Staff support young people to develop positive relationships with their families.
- Professionals are very complimentary about the service, the staff and the impact that the high quality of care has on the young people. In particular, they praise the high standard of communication and the joint working between the home and external agencies.
- The monitoring and auditing systems in place demonstrate an in-depth analysis enabling managers to implement improvements and constantly reflect on practice.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Explore how to capture other means of gathering information about the local community to ensure that the home remains in a safe area.
- Consider utilising the 'wheel of empathy' when producing review reports on young people.
- Build upon the care being delivered by staff by further use of research-led practice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/07/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11) This is with particular regard to the 'weekly boys' meetings'.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11) This is with particular regard to producing a more detailed long-term development plan.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people receive exceptional care which considerably improves their experience, progress and development. The staff team provides a supportive, nurturing environment where young people develop a sense of stability and belonging. One parent wrote, in relation to their son, that the best things about the care home are 'the support he receives; also the way they cook together with staff ensuring his needs are met; he has a good routine and he is also going to school full time again since living there; amazing job.' A professional wrote, 'The young person I am working with is extremely settled, it has been made to feel like his home rather than a house he lives in. He feels comfortable with staff, has made fantastic progress, and is supported so well which has developed him into the positive young person he now is.'

Detailed planning, including thorough impact assessments, allows for young people to experience a smooth arrival to the home knowing that the staff are very well informed of their past and current difficulties. The young people soon develop trusting relationships with staff. Young people respond extremely well to this well-organised process and quickly make progress in areas such as engaging in education, decreasing their risky behaviours and learning life skills. As a result, outcomes are very good, and, in some cases, exceptional. One professional commented about a young person who had recently been admitted into the home, 'I have found the staff at Oakwood go out of their way to ensure the young person is supported. The staff are consistent and helpful and I have been kept up to date regularly. They have managed to cope with challenging behaviour

that this young person can demonstrate and ensure he is supported in the best way.'

The staff are confident and consistent in the way that they meet young people's needs. As a result, young people make healthy attachments and achieve outstanding progress in their ability to re-assess their difficulties and move forward. Young people who once found it difficult to engage in education are now successfully attending school or college. Incidents of challenging behaviour are rare, reducing the need for physical intervention. In addition, young people start to manage their independent living skills and stop previous behaviours, such as smoking. One young person said, 'This is my home now and I don't ever want to leave.'

Staff ensure that the voice of the young person is heard. This is achieved through informal conversations, weekly meetings, key-work sessions and consultation questionnaires. Staff show insight into how best to get young people to open up and talk; this includes taking a young person for a drive, sitting and doing artwork or just watching 'Emmerdale' together before bedtime. Staff who are committed to understanding young people's views and wishes enable young people to contribute to the care that they receive. Young people told the inspector that they feel listened to and that they know that staff care for them. However, the 'weekly boys' meetings' have become a process-driven exercise and do not capture young people's views. A meeting template is used and the meetings are held every Saturday night, regardless of whether young people want a meeting or young people are away on home contact.

Young people's health needs are addressed through appropriate access to health professionals. Trained staff administer medication and first aid effectively. Training, monitoring and auditing of practice and records are outstanding and robust. This means that medication errors are rare. Staff utilise research into early life trauma and attachment in order to increase their understanding and awareness of the childhood experiences of young people. Young people's emotional and physical health improve because staff have insight into their individual needs and offer excellent support.

Moving on from the home is well organised and sensitive. The registered manager is confident in challenging professionals, if necessary, to ensure the best possible opportunities for the young people. The registered manager is clear about the needs that the home can and cannot meet, and works closely with colleagues to ensure the best placement for young people. Many young people who have moved on telephone to say hello to the staff, and reflect on their time here. This indicates that young people have developed effective lasting relationships with staff.

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

Safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are of the highest standard. Staff take the necessary steps to protect young people from harm. Recent risky behaviours have resulted in the home working extremely closely with professionals, with outstanding results. The registered manager and staff have a thorough understanding of the particular risks associated with each young person. The work carried out with young

people who are at risk of going missing from the care home has ensured that these behaviours are reducing. The joint working approach ensures that responses are consistent. The staff fully apply the procedures put in place to ensure that young people are well protected.

The staff effectively identify, understand and manage risks to a high standard. Clear, individual risk and behaviour support plans include trigger and intervention strategies and are regularly reviewed. Behaviour plans outline the expected behaviours of the young person and clarify the consequences if not adhered to. They are developed with input from other professionals, the young person and their families, where appropriate. Plans provide clear responses for staff to take if young people put themselves at risk, and give guidance about age-appropriate risks that young people can take with the support of staff. This could be independent travel, meeting friends socially or managing money.

Staff are calm when managing challenging behaviour and are effective in defusing developing incidents. Staff apply robust and clear boundaries that young people respond well to.

All staff receive effective child protection training. Safeguarding is an agenda item for staff meetings and supervision sessions, and staff feel confident to raise concerns. Additional training includes child sexual exploitation and e-safety, plus radicalisation. The registered manager maintains excellent links with the local safeguarding agency and other professionals. These links ensure good partnership arrangements in keeping young people safe.

Safe, organised and age-appropriate access to the internet is in place. The staff support young people to understand the risks associated with all forms of social media. Risk assessments for e-safety and online exploitation inform staff how to manage individual or group risks. As a result, there have been no incidents or concerns. The staff are highly consistent in applying the rules of safe internet use.

The home has a strong anti-bullying commitment. Restorative justice practices are used with excellent outcomes. Young people feel confident in raising concerns, knowing that they are listened to and taken seriously. Records show how staff fully investigate all concerns raised.

Young people live in a safe environment where all health and safety checks are carried out. Young people know what to do in the event of a fire, as they experience regular fire evacuation drills. The home's location risk assessment, although detailed, lacks input from the wider community, for example the minutes from Police and Community Together meetings. Recruitment arrangements are good. Young people are involved in the recruitment of staff, by setting the interview questions and discussing the applicant's responses.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has 10 years' experience of managing a children's home and of working in partnership with associated agencies. She holds suitable qualifications and continually looks to extend her expertise. The registered manager receives much praise from a wide range of professionals across the sector. She is very well respected within her organisation. Her ability to identify and nurture staff is outstanding. She manages in a fully inclusive manner, which is acknowledged and appreciated by the staff team and the young people.

The registered manager is supported by a deputy manager who is highly effective and manages areas that complement his individual skills. Together, they form a strong leadership team. This ensures that the home is effectively managed at all times. There is a culture of positivity within the home and a real sense of team working, as confirmed by numerous staff members.

The staff team members are committed to improving the lives of young people. When challenges present themselves, they work together as one team to move forward. They are extremely well supported by their colleagues. One professional wrote, 'There has been a consistency of staff, some of whom have been there for as long as the young person has and this has been beneficial for him in being able to forge long lasting and trusting relationships with key people.'

The registered manager leads a highly skilled and experienced staff team that presents with natural ability to provide high-quality care to young people. Staff value the reflective supervision sessions and purposeful team meetings. Staff said that the training offered by the provider is comprehensive, interesting and really helps them to understand how to support young people to make progress and keep safe, in line with the statement of purpose. The registered manager's awareness of the strengths of her staff team ensures that young people experience a consistently high standard of care from staff who are motivated and well trained. New staff benefit from a well-planned induction, which helps to maintain a consistent level of care for young people. This service knows its strengths and areas for development. However, this is not always clearly documented.

The monitoring of the service is highly organised, robust and of an excellent standard. Staff have their individual areas of auditing, and the deputy manager and registered manager oversee their work and results. This enables the leaders to monitor the quality of care effectively and address any issues quickly, as well as to gain a thorough understanding of activities within the home, the young people's progress and staff performance. Records are maintained to an extremely high standard, which aids the analysis of information. An independent visitor provides an objective review of the home and its practices.

The registered manager takes positive steps to gather the views of parents, young people, social workers and other professionals about the quality of care provided by the

home. Effective action is taken in response to these and to other comments.

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: 1223501

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: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Beverley Haydock

Inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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