

# 1221700

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a children's home operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 19 to 20 December 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:** 13 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Leadership and management are very good. Managers have a clear expectation about the required standard of practice from staff.
- The home has a strong ethos of care, support and ambition. Staff establish good relationships with young people, their families and professionals, and pride

themselves on being able to deliver the best possible care for young people.

- Young people make good progress living here. They speak very fondly about their relationships with staff and say that they get on well with one another.
- Young people receive support to access specialist services that meet their identified needs. Staff are proactive in seeking advice and guidance from other professionals.
- Staff work hard to explore and secure education, training or employment that meets young people's needs.
- Young people are encouraged to take part in a range of activities. Staff know the young people well and arrange activities that young people will enjoy.
- Staff promote and celebrate the achievements that young people make.
- Young people are encouraged and supported to develop independent skills, both in a practical and social capacity.
- Young people have good access to healthcare services. Staff ensure that young people's healthcare needs are met in line with statutory requirements.
- Staff implement missing from home procedures well. Records of these incidents are very good. The chronology of events is clear, providing the reader with a good insight into the incident.
- Staff and young people are clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Behaviour management is a key strength of the home.
- Liaison and relationships with other agencies are excellent. This is another key strength of the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Risk assessments and plans do not always contain all the relevant risks and thus safeguarding arrangements are not robust enough.
- Staff are not always trained in the areas of practice that are relevant to the young people's needs and risks.
- Recording is not always clear.
- Key-working sessions are not recorded in a way that reflects the young person's voice.
- When young people smoke tobacco, staff do not manage or monitor this in line with the home's policy and procedures.
- Missing from home protocol is not followed for young people who are categorised as absent by the police. Consequently, the needs and risk associated with risk-taking behaviour are not routinely assessed.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2016	Full	Good

## 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff –</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) and (2) (a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	08/02/2018

### Recommendations

- Children's homes staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 34, paragraph 7.10) In particular, the policies and procedures regarding young people smoking tobacco must be adhered to.
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return to home interview. Homes should take account of the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30) In particular, that young people's absences from home are assessed in line with missing from home policies and procedures, and that these are responded to accordingly.
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) Specifically, that records contain accurate, sufficient detail

that is not ambiguous. Furthermore, that key working is recorded in a way that reflects the discussions had with the young people.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people make good progress living here. They speak very fondly about their relationships with staff and say that they get on well with one another. One young person talked about this being their first time in care. They said that that whereas they felt nervous when they arrived, they settled in well and have always felt supported by staff.

The home is welcoming. The atmosphere is calm and it is reflective of the young people living here. Young people have access to a range of different spaces within the home, for example a games room and a recently improved garden area. Young people speak positively about their home and say that they enjoy living there. Young people have their own private bedrooms that they are able to personalise. However, some young people's bedrooms lack individualisation and are in need of decoration.

The home benefits from having a bedroom that has direct access to a separate kitchen and living space. Young people benefit from this, as they are able to move into this area of the house when they are ready for the transition to independent living. Here, they develop their independent living skills. One young person experienced a huge benefit from this and recently made a successful transition to independent living. Young people talk positively about the support they received when developing their independent skills. One young person said, 'I have been looked after well. I can cook, clean, shower and eat healthily.' They went on to say that they have been 'supported through education, which has got me into college. I can now look after myself at 16 independently.'

Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff. This enables young people to feel safe. Young people are generally honest about their wishes and feelings, and share their concerns and worries. Staff respond in a supportive and proactive way that is timely and considerate to the needs of the young people.

Young people receive support to access specialist services that meet their identified needs. Staff are proactive in seeking advice and guidance from other professionals, for example in relation to substance misuse and mental health and emotional well-being. Staff have good relationships with other professionals. This partnership working provides young people with the multi-agency care that they need. It also allows good professional relationships to develop between agencies. Young people benefit from this approach and subsequently risk-taking behaviours, in the main, reduce.

When young people first arrive at the home, they are often not engaged in education, training or employment. Staff work hard to explore and secure education, training or employment that meets young people's needs. They work together with the relevant agencies to ensure that young people have access to the correct placement, at the

earliest opportunity. Staff seek to find opportunities that young people will find interesting and rewarding and, if required, attach reward incentives to engage young people. This works well and young people, on the whole, respond well to it. There are occasions when young people are not fully engaged in their education, training or employment. When these situations arise, staff attempt to support young people to participate in meaningful and focused educational activities, thus ensuring that they have a good daily routine.

Young people are involved in the running of the home. To ensure that young people engage with this, one member of staff has the key responsibility of coordinating young people's feedback and collating this in a monthly summary. This works well and thus young people's individual wishes and feelings reflect the home's routines, meals, activities, and so on.

Young people are encouraged to take part in a range of activities. Staff know the young people well and arrange activities that young people will enjoy. In addition to this, the activities provide learning opportunities and support the young people in growing in confidence and self-esteem. Young people have the opportunity to go on holiday together with staff. Young people speak very positively about this.

Young people have regular contact with their families, which they enjoy. Staff support and encourage the relationships between young people and their families. One young person recently received support in having contact with a member of their family that they had not seen in a number of years. When contact arrangements are not working well, staff are able to review these with the social worker and revise them accordingly.

Staff promote and celebrate the achievements that young people make. The home has recently nominated one young person for a local authority recognition award. Staff continuously capture the progress that young people make in a range of different ways. For example, young people have the opportunity to develop a life storybook that captures their time living at the home.

Parents and social workers receive regular updates on young people's progress. They speak very positively about this. One social worker said, 'The communication has been clear and fluid... staff members have ensured that if any information needs to be shared, it is shared in a timely manner and the details are clear. Communication has also taken place via email, which has been useful for sharing appointment times and urgent information.'

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

Young people are safe and they know that staff care about them. Staff provide a caring and safe environment. Staff work well together and are consistent in the care that they provide young people. 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. Young people respond well to this. Young people spend meaningful time with staff and they say that they enjoy being in staff's company.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop independent skills, both in a practical and social capacity. They are empowered to take a lead in their lives and learn how choices can have an impact on their future. Young people benefit from regular and meaningful key-work sessions that reflect their needs. They receive support to explore any issues that they may have, and they are encouraged to identify ways to improve things. Young people are benefiting from this work and this is evident in the reduction in risk-taking behaviour and in the positive progress that they make. However, the recording of the young person's thoughts and feelings is not always clear. Thus, records do not reflect the full extent of the key-work sessions and the young person's voice.

Young people's placement plans are of 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 journey. Young people receive individual care that reflects their needs and risks. However, staff do not always identify all known risks; for example, information identified in specialist assessments is not always considered and included in risk assessments. Consequently, the highlighted risks do not form part of the young person's assessments and plans. This means that staff do not have clear information regarding the seriousness of the safeguarding concerns, nor how to manage them.

Young people have good access to healthcare services. Staff ensure that young people's healthcare needs are met in line with statutory requirements. Should young people's healthcare needs change, staff are quick to respond to these and request the necessary support, for example emotional and mental health needs. When young people smoke tobacco, staff do not routinely follow the policy or the procedures that are in place. This means that young people have open access to cigarettes, which could have an impact on their health. In addition, staff do not monitor this risk-taking behaviour and thus any increase or reduction is unknown.

When staff understand the risks, they work proactively with young people, their families and the relevant agencies to assess the risk and reduce it accordingly. For example, one young person had a well-established reputation for going missing from home prior to arriving at the home. This risk has reduced considerably. The young person's social worker said that '[name of young person]'s missing from home has reduced dramatically since moving to [name of the home].'

Staff implement missing from home procedures well. Records are very good. The chronology of events is clear and it provides the reader with a good insight into the incident. Young people receive the support that they need to understand why they go missing and explore strategies that will help them to reduce this risk-taking behaviour. Missing from home procedures are not as robust for young people who are categorised by the police as absent from home, rather than missing from home. In these instances, young people do not benefit from the same level of support; for example, return home interviews do not take place. This means that there is not an opportunity for staff to take into account the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect a young person.

Staff manage safeguarding concerns effectively. They follow procedures well and ensure that all relevant people have the required information in a timely way. In addition, they follow advice and guidance from other professionals and agencies, and ensure that the young people and staff are safe. However, the recording of the action taken to assess and manage the risks is not thorough enough; for example, the recording of a recent investigation missed out key information. This meant that the evidence to support the conclusion of the investigation was not robust enough.

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. Young people are happy living here and incidents are rare. Staff support young people to explore any issues that they have and they de-escalate any potential problems quickly. They do this by having positive relationships and responding to any triggers in a timely and calm way. Behaviour management is a key strength of the home.

The recruitment and selection of staff are sufficiently robust. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify each visitor's identity to protect young people. Health and safety checks are completed and this ensures a safe living environment. The community risk assessment is sufficiently robust.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities with regard to keeping young people safe. Staffing levels are very good. This allows young people to have access to good levels of support that are in line with their individual assessments. This ensures that young people have the required safeguards in place.

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

Leadership and management are very good. The registered manager and the deputy manager are suitably qualified and experienced, and they lead by example. Managers set a clear expectation about the standard of practice that is required. Staff respond well to this and have equally high expectations of the standards of practice within the home. Managers and staff have positive relationships; they respect and support one another. The home runs in line with the aims and ethos of the statement of purpose. Staff are suitably qualified or working towards this. Staff work extremely well together, and provide a consistent approach to the care they provide for the young people.

Staff meet as a team on a monthly basis. These meetings are well structured and meaningful. Meetings are facilitated as a forum to discuss practice issues. This relates to the ongoing care and support to the young people. The managers use the meeting as an opportunity to enhance practice; for example, policy developments are discussed. In addition, staff have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and identify any learning from this.

The home has a strong ethos of care, support and ambition. Staff establish good relationships with young people, their families and professionals, and pride themselves on being able to deliver the best possible care for young people. Staff receive good



supervision and support. Staff speak very highly of the managers and enjoy working here. Staff receive encouragement to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. A good variety of staff training is available and the training matrix is clear. However, staff have not received all the relevant training required to understand young people's specific needs and risks. Managers recognise this and endeavour to access this training at the earliest opportunity.

Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people. Staff work together effectively to ensure that young people receive consistently positive messages. Staff celebrate young people's achievements and successes. They support young people to achieve their maximum potential. Young people are evidently responding well to this. Young people say that they like the structure, routine and boundaries. Professionals also say that they can see the benefits of the structure in place and that young people are responding well to this. One social worker said that '[name of the young person] has made significant changes; they had grown up, taking care of themselves more, more articulate and reflective on their past.'

Liaison and relationships with other agencies are excellent and this is another key strength of the home. Professionals speak very positively about staff communication and partnership working. They receive regular updates on the progress that young people are making. Agencies value the home and speak highly of the staff, the placement, and the progress that young people make. One social worker said that 'staff are brilliant and communication is excellent'. Another professional said that 'I have found staff at [name of the home] to be very helpful and supportive with young people in general, and they always provide an informative update report at young people's reviews.'

The external monitoring of the home is effective. Managers consider the information provided and make changes should this be required. Internal monitoring of the home is also in place and this works well. The home has a good development plan, which is young person centred. Key developments link with the young people's needs and progression, for example the independence suite.

## **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:** 1221700

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

**Registered provider:** Hexagon Care Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Hexagon Care, 1 Tustin Court Port Way, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

**Responsible individual:** Louise Whitby

**Registered manager:** Peter Croasdale

## Inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker, social care inspector

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