

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 is one of a number of homes that are owned and managed by a private organisation. The home provides a stable family environment for young people who are unable to live with their birth families for a variety of reasons. It provides medium- to long-term care for four young people.

The registered manager has managed the home since it was registered in February 2016. However, the manager, staff and young people who moved into the home at that time were all moving together from another property. The registered manager has over 10 years' experience of management.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 November 2018

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: 18 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/07/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

In particular, help children understand the risks of gang membership, including county lines.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people benefit from receiving consistent care from a stable and experienced staff team. The staff provide a supportive and nurturing environment, where young people feel safe and can thrive. Young people develop trusting relationships with staff without the fear that the staff may be leaving the home soon.

Extremely positive relationships between staff and young people were evident during the inspection. One young person said, 'Staff are great. They want to spend time with us. This is the best place that I have lived.' Staff know young people well and skilfully adapt their approach to best effect.

The home is warm and welcoming. It is decorated to a high standard. It is a bright and attractive space that young people are proud of. There is plenty of space for young people to spend time alone or together. The home benefits from several rooms which can be used for activities, one of which has a pool and cinema. Consequently, young people enjoy spending time here.

Living in this home has a positive impact on those who reside here. All the young people are making good progress across all areas of their development. Social workers and young people's family members frequently comment on the difference that living in the home has made to their young people. One social worker commented, in feedback to the home, 'Outcomes for young people are clearly a priority. This is evident with the progress my young person is making.' A similarly positive comment was made by a parent, 'I'm so happy my son is doing so well. Thanks for everything.'

All young people are attending school regularly. This is a significant improvement for some. They are making good educational progress. They have friends in school and regularly take part in extra-curricular activities. Staff reward their progress and young people are proud of their achievements. This improves their likelihood of success in the

future. One education professional commented, 'I feel that there is outstanding teamwork across school and home. I feel as though we are an extension of each other's services, supporting the children to thrive not just survive. [Name of the home] has consistently been the best home I've worked with, supporting children with a range of needs to thrive.'

Young people move in and out of the home in a planned way. Young people receive a positive welcome on their arrival and they experience a positive departure. One young person was preparing to move on from the home during this inspection. Plans were underway for his leaving party and the staff and other young people talked openly about how much he will be missed. Young people who move on from the home remain in touch, demonstrating the significance of the relationships they form while living here.

Staff want young people to leave with happy memories of their time here. Young people receive encouragement to pursue their individual interests and hobbies. Some young people are learning to play the piano or violin, while others enjoy physical activities such as football, ice-skating or scootering. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that they identify the right activities for young people. Young people also enjoyed a holiday to Spain over the summer, and are already making plans for their next holiday. Such experiences help to develop young people's confidence and self-esteem.

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

Young people are well settled in this home and trust the staff who care for them. They feel safe and secure here. They know how to make a complaint, although none have been made since the last inspection over a year ago. They see the registered manager daily and express confidence that she will address any concerns that they may have.

Good placement matching ensures that the needs of any new young people are compatible with the needs of those already living in the home. The rules and boundaries in the home are clear. New young people quickly adapt to living here.

Young people living in the home rarely engage in risk-taking behaviour. They do not smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol. Staff allow young people to take age-appropriate risks as they get older. Staff engage young people in discussions about some of the risks that they may face when out in the local community, such as bullying and internet safety. This ensures that young people are alert to these issues if they present themselves in the future. However, staff have yet to engage young people in discussions about the risks of gang membership and county lines, both of which are becoming increasingly prevalent.

Good-quality risk assessments demonstrate that staff can skilfully identify and manage risk. In addition, behaviour support plans show that staff are alert to triggers for young people and the most appropriate ways to manage escalating behaviours. These include discussion with the young person about the best way to help them when they are in crisis. Risk assessments are shared with those who have parental responsibility, to

ensure that everyone agrees and issues have not been missed.

All staff receive training in the safe use of restraint. Incidents are extremely rare, as staff skilfully defuse the majority of incidents. However, when they do occur, good-quality records reflect the need to intervene to keep the young person or others safe. The ethos of the home is to reward good behaviour, rather than sanction poor behaviour. Young people have weekly incentives for positive behaviour and acting responsibly. However, staff also reward their individual achievements. Examples include having a positive first week at a new school, or not getting involved in the negative behaviour of others. Young people appreciate these unstructured rewards, which recognise the progress they are making and promote success.

Young people get on well together most of the time and receive encouragement to accept difference. The home has a strong anti-bullying ethos. Young people confirmed this. One young person said, 'There is no bullying here. We always feel safe.'

Staff recruitment has a strong emphasis on safeguarding. This ensures that only those who are suitable are employed to work in the home. A comprehensive induction process also ensures that staff receive the support they need, and that managers are assured of their competence to do the job.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has worked in this home since it was registered. She took the lead in identifying this property and making it the homely environment that it now is. She is an experienced manager and has an appropriate management qualification. She is well respected by young people, staff and other professionals. An experienced deputy manager supports her. They have worked together for many years and together make a strong leadership team.

Managers encourage others to voice their ideas and suggestions. This includes the young people living in the home. There is a 'can-do' attitude in this home. Staff believe a solution can always be found. Individual staff take the lead on various jobs and responsibilities, which ensures that things get done. This inclusive approach makes the home a positive environment in which to live and work.

Staff receive regular, supportive supervision and an annual performance appraisal. The manager also prioritises training and development opportunities for staff. She is keen to support the development of those who work here. This helps to motivate staff, who demonstrate a commitment to working in the home. The consistency of the staff team reflects this.

Records are clearly organised and management oversight is strong. The internal and external monitoring of the home are used to drive forward improvements. An annual development plan ensures that targets are set for the year ahead and receive regular review. This helps to avoid drift.

Regular consultation takes place with stakeholders, who are encouraged to suggest improvements. Responses are extremely positive. All professionals spoke highly of the home, praising staff communication and the support given to young people. One consultation report concludes with, '[Name of the home] provides excellent support and care.' Staff also provide weekly update reports for social workers, which they find helpful.

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, Lancashire
PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Beverley Haydock

Inspector

Mandy Williams: social care inspector

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