

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 cares for up to three children between the ages of 11 and 17 years. The home's purpose is to provide care and accommodation for children who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since May 2018. A new manager has been appointed and he is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, **requires improvement to be good**
taking into account

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 10 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/10/2017	Full	Good
14/03/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(x))	11/01/2019
The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))	11/01/2019
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(iii)(vi)(b))	11/01/2019
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(c)(h))	11/01/2019
Case records must be kept if the child dies before attaining	11/01/2019

the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of the child's death; in cases not falling within sub-paragraph (a), for 75 years from the child's date of birth. (Regulation 36 (2))	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2))	11/01/2019

Recommendations

- Ensure that the home's environment is well maintained and provides a homely environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Ensure that staff support and prepare children to participate in their child looked after reviews. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.14)
- Ensure that all restraints are rigorously reviewed and provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- Ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The children living at the home have full-time education provision in place. Once children settle, they make progress in their learning and development. However, the planning for children's education could improve. Not all children benefit from having education in place from the start of their placements. This is particularly the case when children move to the home from a different borough. One child was without formal full-time education for nine months. Furthermore, this child does not have a personal education plan in place. Therefore, staff are not aware of his educational needs, targets or required support.

In the main, staff support children to lead healthy lives, and most children have their health regularly assessed. However, one child has refused to attend health appointments since he moved into the home. Consequently, he has not had his health assessed for 11 months. There was no evidence of staff undertaking any direct work with this child to help him understand the importance of routine health checks.

Children are still not being supported by staff to prepare for important meetings, such as care plan review meetings, despite this being a recommendation at the last inspection.

Aside from the identified shortfalls, positive interactions between the staff and the children were observed during the inspection. Children said that they get on with most of the team and that they feel respected and listened to. A child said, 'It's not bad living here. I get what I need, and I feel cared for.'

Children are supported to maintain and improve relationships with their parents and relatives. Staff understand that well-planned and supported contact with family members strengthens the child's relationships with significant people. Not only does this help the child to develop a positive self-identity, but it will also significantly benefit them in the future.

Additionally, staff have enabled two children to move back to their home areas successfully. These moves were well planned, and the children were well supported.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The home has been through an unsettled period since the last inspection in January 2018. Staff have experienced difficulties in managing and responding to children's aggressive and self-harming behaviour. Although staff tried to keep the children safe, the risks remained too high. As a result, two children's placements ended earlier than planned because staff could not keep them safe.

Gaps in staff's knowledge and training are undermining their ability to respond to high-risk behaviours. Staff have not received any formal training on self-harm, substance misuse, criminal exploitation or radicalisation, despite these being identified as potential risks for children in their care.

Staff do not make sure that the home is free from potential hazards. Staff's daily room checks are not sufficiently robust. For example, a lighter had not been removed from a child's bedroom, despite a member of staff having checked the room.

During the unsettled period at the home, there was a significant increase in serious incidents of aggression, assaults on staff and damage to the home. At times, staff felt it necessary to request police assistance to help manage the children's behaviour. As a result, a child was arrested, charged and prosecuted on more than one occasion. Not only did this have a negative effect on the child's experience and future, but it also

meant that staff and other children were placed at risk.

The managers of the service acknowledged the challenges that the staff and children were experiencing and acted to restore calm and control in the home. A decision was made to reduce the number of placements from four to three, which has proven to be a positive step forward. The home is now more settled and provides a safer environment for children and staff.

Incidents of children going missing from the home have reduced considerably since the changes were introduced. Rigorous missing from home protocols are in place, which staff consistently follow. Additionally, staff carry out direct work with children to reduce the number of missing episodes. Likewise, the number of physical interventions used in the home have reduced because of the children's improved behaviour.

The manager's oversight of physical intervention is variable. For example, staff debriefs are not always carried out within the required timescale. Furthermore, the manager has missed good opportunities to identify gaps in staff knowledge and training.

The home's safe area assessment has been updated and provides an overview of the home's location and community. However, the revised assessment does not include the most recent research or views from other relevant agencies, such as the local authority, police, probation or youth offending service. Thus, the local area has not been assessed as thoroughly as it could have been.

Children's welfare and safety are enhanced because of the thorough safer recruitment practice. All staff are rigorously vetted before they begin working in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager resigned in April 2018. A new manager was appointed, and he took up the post in October 2018. From April to October 2018, an interim manager and the responsible individual managed the service.

As a result of the unsettled period, the home has experienced a high turnover of staff. During the difficult period, staff did not feel well supported. The changes in management and staff undermined the continuity of care provided to children.

The company has succeeded in recruiting experienced staff to join the team. The new manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and he is in the process of registering with Ofsted. He demonstrates enthusiasm and a commitment to improving the service. Already, staff feel better supported and happier in their work.

Staff are benefiting from regular professional supervision and team meetings. New staff undertake a thorough induction to the company and service, and they have their probation period routinely reviewed. This supportive approach is helping to develop a strong and consistent team.

In the main, professionals reported a positive view of the care and protection provided to children. They confirmed that staff keep them updated and share information competently.

Although the home has recently undergone some improvements, including the decorating of some communal areas and children's bedroom, repairs that are outstanding and re-decoration of other areas undermine the welcoming feeling that enables children to feel at home. The manager acknowledges that this is an area that he needs to prioritise, and home improvements are featured in the home's development plan.

The home does not retain children's records when children move on from the home. This potentially compromises any future safeguarding investigation that may arise when children move on from the home. Additionally, staff are unable to provide significant information, for example the outcomes of police arrests and criminal prosecutions, about the children for whom they have previously cared.

Internal and external monitoring lacks rigour and could improve. Three recommendations from the previous inspection have been repeated because they have not been satisfactorily met. Notably, the independent visitor is still not routinely obtaining the views of parents and other professionals to inform his assessment of the care and protection provided in the home, children are still not being supported to engage in their child looked after reviews and restraints records do not yet provide a strong overview of the incident.

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, Lancashire
PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: Louise Whitby

Proposed Registered manager: Robert Allen

Inspector

Marina Tully, social care inspector

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