

1221357

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 owned and managed by a private organisation. The home provides a stable environment for young females who are unable to live with their birth families for a variety of reasons. It accommodates up to four young people.

The registered manager has been at the home since it was registered in June 2016.

Inspection date: 21 January 2019

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

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: 13 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2017	Full	Good
25/01/2017	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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11(1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	08/03/2019
<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 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; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(b))</p>	08/03/2019
<p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring</p>	08/03/2019

and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13((1)(2)(a)(e)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14(1))	08/03/2019
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1))	08/03/2019
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b))	08/03/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(b)(4)(a)(b))</p>	08/03/2019

Inspection judgements

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

Young people currently residing in the home are making good progress. The majority of young people are attending school or college and doing well. They have friends and engage in after-school activities, such as art club. Staff are encouraging them to think about their future career pathways. This helps to motivate young people to succeed.

However, not all young people who have lived in the home over the last year have experienced such positive outcomes. Poor placement matching has led to some young people only living in the home for a matter of days. These young people's placements were difficult and resulted in them moving on from the home in a crisis. One young

person was woken from sleep and removed by the police. This was after she had returned to the home after being missing from home, and immediate notice had been served on her placement. Such experiences impact negatively on young people and have a damaging impact on their future placement stability.

There have been several staff changes over the last year. Inconsistent staffing does not aid the promotion of trusting relationships, as young people become reluctant to invest time in getting to know new staff. Managers were reliant on agency staff to cover the rota on Christmas Day. Young people spoke to inspectors about this, expressing how disappointing it was to spend the day with staff they did not know. One member of staff also left without serving a notice period, leaving young people without the opportunity to say goodbye.

Most of the current residents enjoy living in the home. Examples of their comments include:

- 'It's amazing.'
- 'Staff make sure we're ok when we are feeling down.'
- 'It's sound here.'
- 'Staff are always nice.'

The home is warm and welcoming. Staff do try to create a homely family atmosphere. Staff and young people go shopping and prepare home-cooked meals together. They also enjoy trips to the cinema and engage in craft activities in the home together. Staff promote young people's individuality and support them to attend activities in the community. One young person attends Rangers and also helps out at the local Rainbows group, while another attends the local youth club. As a result, improvements in their self-esteem and confidence are evident. One social work professional commented, 'The placement is encouraging [Name of young person] to be independent and identifying her longer-term needs.'

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 December 2017. Staff practice in relation to managing and responding to young people's aggressive and challenging behaviour has been inconsistent and sometimes punitive. Young people have struggled to make sense of what is being asked of them. Inappropriate comments have been made in times of crisis.

Consequences are not restorative in nature and do not relate to the incident. On one occasion, a young person was prevented from attending a drama group, when this was a valuable means for her to have space away from the home and express her feelings. However, there was no record of this in the home's log book. Such responses only mirror the chaotic parenting that many young people have experienced in the past and do not affect change.

For some young people, their risk-taking behaviours, such as episodes of self-harm and putting themselves at risk by going missing, have reduced. They are engaging well with staff, talking about their worries and feeling better about themselves. Staff monitor

incidents of concern, with a view to looking at patterns and trends, or to highlight escalating concerns. However, some concerning incidents have not been recorded, minimising the effectiveness of this.

Young people benefit from risk assessments, which assist staff, especially those new to the home, to quickly identify pertinent issues for each young person. These assessments include strategies for staff to implement in order to minimise the risk. However, they do not always contain up-to-date details, and in one case contained information relating to another young person. Furthermore, they are not routinely shared with the young person's social worker, to ensure that consideration has been given to all known risks.

Similarly, missing from home protocols do not always contain pertinent information, such as reporting procedures, or take into consideration the emotional state of the young person prior to them going missing. This potentially compromises young people's safety.

Staff provide young people with emotional support and young people confide in staff. Staff liaise appropriately with other safeguarding bodies in these circumstances. Staff complete room searches and mobile phone and social media checks if they suspect the young person is in a low mood or at risk. This helps keep young people safe.

Physical interventions are infrequent. Staff receive appropriate training to ensure that any incidents are managed safely. Debriefs with young people take place, ensuring that they have the opportunity to raise any issues of concern.

Staff recruitment is generally sound. However, insufficient information on agency staff was accessible in the home during the inspection and was difficult to locate. This included a lack of basic information, such as full names of agency staff.

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

There is a suitably experienced registered manager in charge of the home. However, at the time of this inspection, she was absent from the home. Ofsted has been kept updated in relation to this situation. Unfortunately, there is no permanent deputy either; a member of staff from another home in the organisation has been asked to step into this position in the short term.

This has been an unsettled period and the home has experienced a high turnover of staff. During this difficult period, staff have not been well supported. This includes the registered manager, who did not receive any formal supervision for a period of five months. The changes in management and staff undermine the continuity of care provided to children.

Many management tasks have been overlooked during this period. Managers' auditing is weak. Records are poor and do not cross-reference with other records in the home. Similarly, details are missing from the home's admission and discharge register. These issues had not been identified prior to this inspection.

The external monitoring also lacks rigour and could be improved, as many of the issues relating to poor recording and discrepancies when cross-referencing should have been identified prior to this inspection. Assurances had been given in one report that the home would not be accepting any further placements while there were no managers in the home. However, a young person was placed the following day. This impacted on the young people already living in the home and on staff, who were covering additional

shifts and trying to carry on with limited management oversight. During the inspection, senior managers in the organisation gave inspectors assurance that no further placements will be made until management arrangements are secure.

Generally, professionals involved with the home report a positive view of the care and protection provided to children. They confirm that staff keep them updated and share information competently. One commented, 'My experience with the home has been good. Staff keep me updated.'

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: 1221357

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: Zahra Gibrail

Inspectors

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker, social care inspector

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