

1221700

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to five young people who are male and aged between 11 and 17 years old.

The registered manager has been in post since February 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspection on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 2022

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: 9 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
20/09/2018	Full	Good
19/12/2017	Full	Good
13/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy trusting and nurturing relationships with staff. A child said, 'The staff have always been there for me, and they have never let me down. I can talk to them about anything. They really have looked after me and supported me.'

Children receive care and support from staff who know them well and understand their needs. Children make good progress, especially those who have lived at the home from many years. However, there have been some difficulties for a former resident, which resulted in the child having some poor experiences.

One child who is about to leave said that he could not have done this without the support of the staff. Other children said that they now have the confidence to travel independently to and from school and to see family and friends.

Children receive support to develop their independence skills. However, their plans do not identify their individual strengths, needs or progress. This means that areas where additional support is required to help children prepare for their next steps may not be identified or addressed.

Staff are aspirational in their support for children's learning and education. They work tirelessly to source the right educational support college placement or apprenticeships to help children achieve their individual goals. One child said, 'They [the staff] are very supportive in my course and are trying really hard to sort my education.'

Staff work very well with the families of the children. This is echoed by the complimentary comments from parents. Staff help families and the children to rebuild their relationships, so much so that one child is now enjoying weekend stays with family and is hoping to return home. The social worker said that this would not have been achieved without the staff's support.

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

Children live in a safe and comfortable home. Inspectors raised concerns about the safety of the outbuilding in the rear garden, and action was taken to address this.

Risks to children's safety and well-being have decreased significantly from their starting points. However, their individual risk assessments do not always reflect the current concerns or how staff are to minimise these. This includes the plans and processes for assessing children's safety when staying with family members.

The incidents of children going missing from care have significantly declined. In most cases, staff are aware of the action to take to try to locate a child. However,

for a former resident, their plans were not clear, meaning that there could be a delay of up to 15 hours before they were reported missing, potentially placing the child at the risk of harm.

Children have developed their understanding of safe behaviour and can manage their emotions in ways that are not harmful.

Staff receive training in positive behaviour support. They have a good understanding of children's needs and why they may behave in certain ways. This helps them to respond to challenging situations in a consistent and positive manner. As a result, there has only been one physical intervention in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager in post. The manager has high aspirations for the children and a good understanding of their needs.

The current staff team is mainly male, meaning that there is a gender imbalance. The manager is aware of this and is striving to address this.

Staff say that they are supported well by the manager and deputy and are confident to talk to them about any concerns that they may have. Staff training is positive and helps staff gain the knowledge and skills to meet the children's needs. However, the workforce development plan is not reflective of the current staff team or their training needs. This has not been identified through the home's monitoring systems.

Monitoring of the home has slipped since the last inspection. The manager's monitoring and independent person's monitoring have not identified several shortfalls in record-keeping, such as the physical intervention records, risk assessments, key-worker records, and missing-from-care records.

The quality of record-keeping is not consistently good. Many records are not signed and dated by the author. Some records lack sufficient detail and fail to tell the story of the event or of the discussion with the child. Furthermore, some records and documents contain inappropriate language to describe the child and the behaviour that they are displaying, for example describing a child who is in crisis as having a 'paddy' or 'tantrum'.

The manager works well with professionals involved in children's care and is proactive in engaging new services to meet children's changing needs. Parents and professionals are highly supportive of the manager and staff and the support that they provide to the children.

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 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— 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; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(d)) In particular that the children's risk assessments are sufficiently detailed and reflect their current needs and that the outhouse in the rear garden is made safe.	8 April 2022
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 the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;	8 April 2022

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 and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(h))	
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)(a)(b)(c))	8 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that each child is fully prepared to move on from the home. That each child has their own bespoke independence plan that identifies their individual goals, strengths and areas for development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that where possible that the staff team is reflective of different gender groups. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- The registered person must ensure that records and documentation are recorded to a consistently good standard so that they tell the child's story. Furthermore, staff should not use inappropriate language to describe children, such as 'the boy', or their actions. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 1 Tustin Court, Riversway, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: George Sumner

Registered manager: Peter Croasdale

Inspectors

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

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