

1269215

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 private children's home registered for up to three children.

The home's statement of purpose states that children living in this home may have a range of social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since June 2023. The former deputy manager is in the role of acting manager. The acting manager does not intend to apply to be registered with Ofsted. Recruitment for a permanent manager is being completed.

There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 July 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2022	Full	Good
26/05/2021	Full	Good
14/01/2020	Full	Good
22/08/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Children have not always been consulted about matters affecting their care, welfare and lives. Leaders and managers have not spoken to children about the changes to the management of the home or informed them of the action taken to appoint a new manager. Leaders and managers have not identified the impact that these changes have had on the children or how these changes have made them feel.

Children have developed some positive relationships with the current manager, staff and their key workers. Inspectors observed the interaction between children and staff to be warm, caring and respectful.

Additionally, social workers and children's parents are complimentary about the care provided to the children. The staff team encourages children to spend regular time with their families. They help children to rebuild their relationships with family at a pace that the children are comfortable with and that is in line with their wishes.

The in-house therapist is integral to the therapeutic support provided to children. She provides regular talking therapy for children and works alongside the staff team to help them promote children's positive emotional well-being.

Staff have not been proactive in their exploration of support available from external agencies to support children who use substances. Similarly, staff have not consulted with medical professionals in relation to the management of one child's pseudo seizures. Furthermore, children's health needs are not always clearly identified in their plans, which means that staff are unable to effectively monitor children's health conditions.

Children have made progress in their education. This is because the staff's approach to promoting education has improved. Education is incentivised to ensure that children sustain their improved attendance in school. When there are barriers to learning, the staff team works closely with the schools to resolve any issues.

When children move out of the home, their views, wishes and feelings are always considered. The staff team supports children to develop their independence skills, develop resilience and prepare them for adulthood. Consequently, children's moves to semi-independent accommodation have been planned and a positive transition.

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

In some instances, senior leaders and managers have failed to investigate concerns shared by a child relating to alleged poor staff conduct. There has been no oversight by senior leaders or managers to ensure that the child has been spoken to about

their concerns or to ensure that the appropriate action, support and guidance has been provided to staff. The failure to follow their allegation management procedures has left the children vulnerable.

Despite some shortfalls in the management of allegations, leaders and managers have acted promptly to investigate historical practice concerns that have been disclosed by a child in recent weeks. At the time of the inspection, senior managers were conducting a full investigation into staff practice and working closely with the relevant safeguarding professionals.

Staff do not always follow appropriate whistle-blowing procedures. There has been a delay in staff reporting inappropriate practice to the senior leadership team. Whistle-blowing procedures have not been revisited with the staff team following this shortfall. In addition to this, inspectors found that there has not always been an open-door culture in the home. Staff have not always been confident in raising concerns with the senior leadership team about ineffective management of the home.

Poor staff practice has not always been dealt with by managers. When lessons learned have been identified in relation to staff's management of incidents, they have not been shared with staff individually or as a team. This is a missed opportunity to improve the staff team's understanding of promoting the safety and well-being of children.

Following an unsettled period at the home, staff have worked hard to manage children's behaviours and their reduce risk-taking behaviours. As a result, the frequency of children going missing from the home has reduced, and the use of restraint is minimal.

Staff understand children's behaviours and how to support them to regulate their behaviour. Staff support children to develop alternative coping strategies to help reduce the risk of them causing harm to themselves. When concerns arise or children put themselves at risk of harm, staff talk to children about this and give them advice and support.

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

After a period of absence from the home, the registered manager's employment ended in June 2023. There is an acting manager in place, but they are due to go on maternity leave. Senior managers are actively trying to appoint a new manager. Consequently, there is a level of uncertainty for both children and staff in relation to the plans for the management of the home.

Senior managers have not been effective in their oversight of the home. As a result, they have been slow to identify shortfalls in the day-to-day running of the home. The responsible individual has now implemented a new monitoring tool and other auditing systems to improve their oversight of the home.

In the last few months, the management team has worked hard to increase the support provided to the staff. Staff said that the level of managerial guidance has improved, and this has helped to promote staff morale and refocus the staff team on improving the quality of care provided to children.

Leaders and managers recognise the areas for development required to improve children's experiences of living in the home. They are realistic about the home's current operation, and they are looking for ways to improve the service and staff practice. They have ensured that all previous requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been appropriately actioned.

Team meetings are now taking place more frequently than in previous months. This provides staff with a forum to discuss the children's progress and share their views about the home's operation. Leaders and managers monitor staff training to ensure that staff have the appropriate training, including training that is specific to the children's needs and risk behaviour.

A review of the quality of care has been completed. This is evaluative and shows that children do make progress because of their time living at the home. However, this review does not take into account feedback or views from children. Similarly, the independent person's reports do not evidence that regular feedback is obtained from parents or professionals.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv))	17 August 2023
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i))	17 August 2023

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))	17 August 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— promotes their welfare. 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; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	17 August 2023

(Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h))	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	5 September 2023
If the registered provider is an organisation, the organisation must ensure that the responsible individual undertakes such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the responsible individual has the skills needed for supervising the management of the home. (Regulation 29 (2))	17 August 2023
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2) (5))	17 August 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 1269215

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: Sylvia Lowe

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector
Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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