

1269215

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people. The home is operated by a private company. The home specialises in working with children and young people who have social and emotional difficulties. The home is registered for single-gender occupancy only (female).

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 January 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)) This particularly refers to completing risk assessments considering the impact of new admissions on children already placed, and completing risk assessments for any new admission to identify their risks to staff immediately.	31/01/2019
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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)) This refers to ensuring that staff have training in any specific areas of risk presented by the children accommodated.	31/01/2019
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	31/01/2019

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home has made significant improvements since it was inspected at a monitoring visit in August 2018. Following the discharge of the young people previously in placement, the home went through a period of having no children on its roll. This allowed the company time to recruit and train an almost entirely new staff team. A new manager has also been appointed, and has been registered with Ofsted. A new cohort of young people has been introduced in a staggered and mainly planned way. They have benefited from having a more consistent staff team and a much less chaotic environment. As a result, they have flourished and surpassed expectations in respect of the progress they have made.

Discussion with and observation of young people demonstrated that they have genuinely warm and caring relationships with staff. They are aware of the progress they have made, and feel positive about living in the home. They feel that staff care about them. They benefit from receiving calm and consistent care, and having clear expectations conveyed to them about routines and boundaries. Young people are in positive routines and themselves acknowledged that this helps them keep on track.

Young people who previously had significant problems with school attendance and exclusions now willingly attend school regularly and punctually. Some young people are aware of gaps in their education, and are keen both to address these and to go on to undertake GCSEs in order to achieve their career aspirations.

Young people are healthy and have their health needs met. Only one young person smokes and she has been supported to significantly reduce the number of cigarettes she has per day from her starting point. Young people also have targets to work towards regarding healthy eating and improving their diet. During the inspection, young people were observed being helped and encouraged to prepare healthy foods. Staff then sat around the table and shared the food with them, which promoted a communal social experience and meant that positive feedback was given to the young people regarding their cooking skills. Not only does this promote healthy eating and social skills, but it also contributes to improving confidence and self-esteem through positive verbal rewards. A wide range of activities also support young people to be healthy by improving their fitness.

The young person's voice is evident throughout the numerous key-work and direct-work sessions that take place with them. Records show that young people are helped to speak about issues they may find difficult or upsetting, and that staff respond to this appropriately through offering support and advice. Staff ensure that consultation

documents are completed with young people prior to child looked after reviews, which was commended by independent reviewing officers who were spoken to as part of this inspection. Additionally, staff encourage young people to participate in post-review consultations to identify what their understanding of the review outcomes and decisions was. This ensures that young people understand what plans are in place for them. One young person who had recently been admitted was unsure of her plan and staff were observed supporting her to develop her own ideas and to prepare for a meeting where she could express her views and wishes.

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

The safeguarding of young people has improved in every way since the previous inspection in August. Young people are safer, their lives are less chaotic and they rarely engage in risk-taking behaviours. Clear risk assessments identify their risks and the steps staff must take to mitigate and manage those risks. The staff spoken to were clear about young people's pertinent risks, and also about the procedures in place for keeping young people safe. The company has invested resources into training the staff so that they have better knowledge of risk management, processes and procedures.

Staff use a risk-assessment outcome tool to identify areas in which to undertake direct work to improve young people's understanding of risk and how they can minimise those risks. The direct work increases their awareness of issues which may impact on their safety and well-being. External agencies reported overwhelmingly that young people's risks reduce from their points of placement.

Missing from home was a high-risk area for young people who were previously placed and they continued to go missing during their placements. Missing from home was also a significant risk factor for the young people who are currently placed. They have had no missing-from-home incidents since their placements began, which shows very good progress for them in this area. Young people have clear missing-from-home protocols and staff understand the process they must follow should a young person go missing. Young people's risks relating to drugs, alcohol and inappropriate associates have also reduced to the extent that no incidents have occurred.

Social media is a risk area for one young person. The home works in conjunction with her social worker and grandparent to manage this risk and protect her from vulnerability and harm. Direct work supports her to develop understanding so that she is able to self-regulate in this area and keep herself safe. When she is unsafe, steps are implemented, for example removing her mobile phone to address the immediate risk until she has completed further work.

Two requirements relating to safeguarding have been made following this inspection. A young person was admitted to the home as an emergency admission late on a Friday evening. The young person was admitted without a risk assessment or an impact assessment which considered her risks in relation to the other young people's risks. This potentially compromised her own safety and that of other young people and staff.

Fortunately, there were no incidents over that weekend and further information was gathered as soon as possible. However, the young person was at high risk of engaging in self-harm and staff had not had the relevant training to enable them to manage and reduce the risks relating to self-harm prior to her admission.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's new manager has made many changes to the home which have had a positive impact. He has recruited several new members to the staff team and the home is now almost fully staffed, which means the reliance on agency staff is reducing. Where agency staff have had to be used, the manager has tried to ensure consistency in order to minimise the disruption for young people. The recruitment of new staff should also go some way towards addressing the fatigue that some staff have been feeling from working additional hours to fill gaps in the rota.

The manager has developed an action plan in relation to the requirements made at the previous inspection, and can evidence that these requirements have been met. There are good systems in place for monitoring the home and auditing records; these ensure that tasks are done and records are accurate and up to date. The manager has made changes to the recording and filing system by simplifying it so that there is a logical sequence to young people's records, which makes them easier to understand.

There is a development plan in place and the manager has a very good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, as well as a clear plan of action for continuing to develop and progress the home, young people and the staff team. The manager welcomes feedback from the independent visitor, and was also receptive to advice and guidance from the social care inspector during this inspection. Additionally, the manager seeks feedback from external agencies to ascertain their views and learn from any suggestions they may have.

Staff reported that there is a positive working environment and management ethos. They reported that they are supported by their team, the manager and the responsible individual. Those staff who remained from before the last monitoring inspection reported that the home has completely changed for the better.

Staff reported that training is sufficient and relevant. Some staff supervision has not taken place within the stated timescale. A requirement has been made relating to this, due to the staff being mainly new to their role and requiring a high level of support. However, a mitigating factor is that managers are visible in the home and offer the staff support on a daily basis.

Managers and staff are well aware of the progress the young people are making, and are keen to ensure that this continues. They are rightly proud of the young people and the progress they have made so far.

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: 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: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Julian Monk

Inspector

Charlie Bamber: social care inspector

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