

1269215

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private company. It is registered to care for up to three children of the same gender (female). Children living in the home also have access to the organisation's school, and its therapy departments.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Two of them spoke with the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2020.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 August 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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 26 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/05/2021	Full	Good
14/01/2020	Full	Good
22/08/2019	Full	Inadequate
06/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All children make some progress when living in the home. They are supported to develop positive, trusting relationships with staff, who care about them and who understand their individual needs. The staff team provides children with stability and security and some children have lived in the home for several years.

Children's views about their experiences of living in the home are mixed. One child told the inspector, 'I like it here. I have bonds with the other kids and staff. We all get on. The staff help with stuff, and I know I'm safe.' Some children do not like the boundaries or decisions that have been made to keep them safe. Children know how to complain and are listened to when they raise any concerns.

Records do not robustly reflect how the needs of children moving into the home are considered, alongside the needs of children already there. This reduces opportunities to demonstrate how children's individual and group needs can be met. Children are supported to move on from the home in a planned way.

All children living in the home have previously experienced disruptions in their education. They are now supported to regularly attend the organisation's school and are also helped to sit exams, access college courses and, when appropriate, seek employment.

Children are supported to pursue their interests. Their achievements are celebrated. Children are offered opportunities to engage in a range of leisure activities, sports clubs and holidays. This helps children to develop their social networks, increase their self-esteem and to take pride in their successes.

The staff team invests in relationships with families and supports children to safely have contact with people who are important to them. Staff talk to children about issues that are affecting them. Direct work sessions are tailored to their individual needs. The focus is on supporting children to make safer choices and to develop their awareness of healthy and safe relationships and to help them to keep themselves safe online. Children also benefit from direct access to the in-house therapist.

The home has undergone significant redecoration since the last inspection. It is bright, airy and welcoming. Children are helped to develop a sense of belonging and are included in decisions about the decor and furnishings of the home. Children's interests and photos are reflected throughout the home. One child has recently changed bedrooms and her room is in need of redecoration. The carpet in the manager's office is damaged and needs replacing.

The use of bedroom door alarms has been risk assessed but the alarms have not been isolated, and when used they affect all bedroom doors. This impacts on all children's movements and is potentially detrimental to group-living dynamics

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

Children say they feel safe living in the home. Professionals and parents share this view. One parent told the inspector, 'They do all they can to keep [name of child] safe. All staff seem on the same page. They understand her and work well together.'

Children's individual risks and vulnerabilities are well understood. Risk and behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed and updated but opportunities to assess risks from potential hazards in the home have been missed.

At times, children have engaged in high-risk behaviours with other children in the home, but children's plans do not consider the impact of group-living dynamics. This limits opportunities for staff to implement strategies to minimise risks, and reduces management oversight. There have been occasions when the police have been called to manage behaviours. This increases the potential for children to be criminalised.

There has been a significant reduction in incidents of children going missing from home and engaging in self-injury or harmful behaviours. Staff recognise and are vigilant about triggers and indicators of exploitation. When incidents do occur, staff know how to respond. They are proactive in working with other agencies to keep children safe.

Allegations are managed in line with allegation management procedures, and there is strong oversight from the manager.

Staff hold children to keep them safe only as a last resort. However, some records lack detail about the measure used, and debriefs have not always enabled staff to reflect on the incident with someone who was not involved. This reduces opportunities for learning and reflection.

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

The home is managed by a suitably skilled and experienced manager. She is working towards the relevant qualification. The manager is supported by a deputy manager and the responsible individual. Managers know the children and staff well. They are committed to improving outcomes for children.

The manager has good oversight of incidents. She takes action to reflect on learning from incidents to improve the quality of care provided in the home. However, one serious incident was not notified to Ofsted, as required by regulation. This reduces the regulator's oversight of incidents in the home.

Opportunities to limit the impact of group-living dynamics have been missed. On one occasion, a decision made by managers about children's bedrooms resulted in staff responding reactively rather than proactively to children. This is not only distressing for children but is also potentially detrimental to dynamics in the home.

Staff have good working partnerships with other agencies. Efforts are made to obtain children's plans from their placing authorities. However, managers have not consistently used escalation processes when plans have not been received.

The staff team is stable. Staff say they feel supported, and as a result of strategies implemented by managers team morale is currently high. The team benefits from regular, detailed team meetings. They can share their views and their opinions are regularly sought.

Staff have access to regular, practice-based supervisions and a range of training opportunities. However, most staff have not completed training around substance misuse, despite this being an ongoing risk for children and a recommendation at the previous inspection.

The home's statement of purpose had been updated to reflect staffing changes, but this had not been submitted to Ofsted, as required by regulation.

The requirements and three recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. One recommendation relating to training has not been met and a requirement has now been set.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c)) This is specifically in relation to the registered person ensuring that escalation processes are implemented consistently with placing authorities to obtain children's plans.	14 October 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 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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(f))	14 October 2022

This is specifically in relation to the registered person ensuring that staff have access to relevant training to meet the needs of children living in the home, in particular that staff complete substance misuse training.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(iv)) This specifically relates to ensuring that records clearly reflect the measure of restraint used.	14 October 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	14 October 2022
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))	14 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children's bedrooms are suitably decorated, and that the office carpet is replaced. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them, including the impact of group-living dynamics and potential hazards in the home. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the agreed use of bedroom door alarms used to safeguard one child does not impact on other children living in the home.

(Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards page 16, paragraph 3.16)

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: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Rachel Horrobin

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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