

2521953

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number of homes that are operated by a large organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural needs.

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in February 2020.

Visit dates: 14 to 15 December 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Two young people have lived at this home since it was registered in October 2019. Their progress has been extremely positive. They have developed warm, trusting relationships with staff and as a result they have grown in confidence. They are becoming more independent and are enjoying improved physical and emotional well-being.

The young people's social worker commented, 'They are more confident and happier to voice their opinion. I have seen a massive difference in their communication and participation.' A relative said, 'The staff are always so nice to them. This has made them happier and more confident.'

Staff ensure that young people are enabled to maintain important relationships. Family contact is closely supported. Staff have also supported the young people to develop positive friendships, for example by contacting parents of the young people's schoolfriends to arrange social activities.

The young people's physical health has improved since their admission. Staff have worked closely with healthcare professionals in order to support the young people to reduce and ultimately cease medication they had taken for several years. Their sleeping patterns have improved, and their behaviour is generally more relaxed.

Staff ensured that young people's learning was well supported during periods of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The young people engaged well in home-based learning, and school staff were complimentary about the work they completed.

Young people have regular opportunities to take part in fun and fulfilling activities, such as bike riding, cadets and boxing. Their interests are encouraged. For example, due to their interest in astronomy, a staff member arranged for them each to have a star named after them.

The safety of children

Clear routines and consistent boundaries provide the young people with security and stability. Young people say that they feel safe, and express confidence in the staff team.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the risks to young people, and speak in particular about the need to support the young people's understanding of personal safety. To this end, regular direct work is carried out with the young people. Records of this work could be improved to better demonstrate the young people's participation.

Risk management plans are regularly updated in line with any changes in young people's needs, or new information. Staff understand that positive risk-taking is an

important part of the young people's personal development. Staff have provided the young people with well-planned support to increase their skills and confidence. This has enabled the young people to visit their local shop independently.

There have been no safeguarding concerns at this home since it began operating. There have been no instances of young people going missing or any incidents of behaviours requiring staff to physically intervene.

Leaders and managers

There is a manager in place who registered with Ofsted in February 2020. The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the young people's needs and was able to provide a clear overview of their progress.

There is a stable staff team in place, which means that the young people receive their care from people who they know well. Currently, the staff team is wholly male. As a result, the young people do not have the opportunity to have regular contact with different gender groups. The manager has recognised that this is an area for development and is currently attempting to address the matter.

Staff are well motivated and speak positively about the leadership of the home. They describe a comprehensive training programme which includes learning based on young people's needs. Staff express satisfaction with their ongoing support and supervision.

The manager makes effective use of internal monitoring processes. He demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. Young people are encouraged to share their views on the home and their experiences. However, better use could be made of feedback from external professionals.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that direct work undertaken with young people reflects that young people have been encouraged to express their views, wishes and feelings and that these have been taken into account when planning and undertaking young people's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.5)
- The registered person should ensure that young people are supported by staff from different gender groups, so that young people are enabled to develop relationships with a diverse range of adults. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- The registered person should ensure that the six-monthly review of the quality of the care provided by the home, includes the views and opinions of external stakeholders. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2521953

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Kyle Ingham

Inspectors

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

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