

2663174

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home.

The home registered in March 2022, as did the suitably qualified and experienced manager.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

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	inadequate
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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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Not previously inspected

Inspection type**Inspection judgement**

Inspection judgements

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

Children's progress in this home is inconsistent. This is because the leadership of the home is ineffective. The impact on one child of poor levels of oversight has been considerable. Although the home is described as being a therapeutic service, few staff have a good understanding of this type of care. Managers accept these shortfalls and the judgements made at this inspection.

Staff do not ensure that children move on from the home in a planned way. A child who expected to stay at the home for a long time had to move suddenly. This was because staff could not meet their needs. This did not provide the child with consistent care. It did not give the child confidence that adults will commit to them in the long term.

The planning for children moving into the home is not consistently effective. Managers do not ensure that children's needs are evaluated alongside those of other children living in the home. Staff's training and skills do not form part of the decision-making about children moving into the home. This leads to poor matching of children's needs and staff being unable to provide good-quality care.

Children make progress in some areas of their development. They settle into the home quickly. Staff work hard to build relationships with children, including when barriers exist due to children's previous experiences. This means that children begin to enjoy positive experiences within a short period of living in the home.

Children's emotional needs are supported by a therapeutic team. Some children engage in individual therapy, which is evidence of their progress. The therapeutic team helps staff to understand the impact of children's previous experiences. Although this support is not yet embedded, therapists are helping staff to provide the care that children need.

Children's educational needs are being met. They attend school regularly, including when this has been difficult previously. Staff support children's education by advocating on their behalf when necessary. Improved attainment is helping to increase children's options for the future. Children also benefit from having much-needed structure to their days.

Children enjoy a range of different activities. This includes going on holiday and having regular horse-riding lessons. As well as building positive memories of living in the home, these activities help children to develop their social skills.

Staff support children's safe relationships with family members. One parent spoke warmly about the help they received from staff. As a result of this input, the child has reconnected with their parent. This is a good outcome for the child.

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

Staff do not manage behaviour effectively. They do not understand how to use the model of care alongside behaviour management plans. This means that staff do not have effective strategies to use to support children, and children feel unsafe. Staff resort to calling the police for assistance. This reduces the staff's ability to present to children with confidence and competence. The impact of these serious shortfalls in practice is significant for children's everyday experiences, safety and protection.

Staff develop risk assessments to respond to safeguarding concerns. The quality of these assessments is much improved in recent months. Individualised strategies help children to become safer. Instances of self-harm and substance misuse reduce as a result.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When they do, staff observe local protocols, which include searching for children. Children become safer and learn that adults will act to protect them.

Staff undertake individual discussions with children. Some of this work is helpful, for example when children talk about activities they enjoy. Other sessions do not appear to be effective. For example, when staff want children to talk about their worries, children disengage. This is a missed opportunity to help children to make progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership of the home is not effective. The registered manager does not show that he is in full day-to-day control. He lacks oversight of the home and does not ensure that the quality of care for children improves. The registered manager accepts that improvements are needed to better support and protect children.

The home is not operating in accordance with its statement of purpose. Staff are not consistently offering therapeutic care for children. As a result, children do not make expected progress and significant incidents occur. Managers have failed to make timely improvements and children do not receive the support that they need.

The team of staff do not work well together. Communication between staff is not consistently effective. As a result, staff have differing expectations of their roles. This has caused difficulties for children and further fractured the staff team. Several staff have left, and the current staff team is very small. The registered manager has a poor understanding of these concerns, including the impact on children.

The approach to training is not effective. The majority of staff did not learn how to provide therapeutic care for children until many months after the home opened. This had a detrimental impact on the ability of staff to help children cope with their trauma. Staff have recently undertaken bespoke training to provide them with the

skills and confidence they require. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this learning.

The management of allegations is inconsistent. Referrals to the appropriate professionals take place and proper procedures are followed. However, managers and staff do not support children who may make allegations as a coping mechanism. Managers' support to staff is poor. This significantly affects children's placements in the home.

Staff do not feel well supported by managers. Staff worry about the impact of caring for children with complex histories. They feel that managers could do more to understand the difficulties that have occurred. Managers are aware of this and are making changes. Supervision sessions have been improved and are more reflective. Team meetings are well attended and include considerable discussion about children's needs. It is too soon to know whether these improvements will make a difference to positive outcomes for children.

External monitoring is provided by an experienced independent person. Visits are undertaken regularly. Reports are comprehensive and focus on the experiences of children. The registered manager responds well to specific recommendations. The independent person raised several concerns about the management oversight of the home. Senior managers eventually became aware of this and have put in place systems to improve this area of practice.

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, the 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(v)(vi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are trained to provide the care that is set out in the home's statement of purpose.	9 December 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and	9 December 2022

positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ix)(x)(xi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the support and skills to understand and manage behaviour that is challenging.	
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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	9 December 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children only move into the home following careful analysis of their needs, alongside those of other children living in the home.	9 December 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff who carry out individual work with children, to help them come to terms with their past experiences, do so in line with the particular type of care that the home provides. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.15)

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: 2663174

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: Joanne Abram

Registered manager: John Oxley

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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