

2547611

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was registered with Ofsted in June 2020. It provides care for up to five children who have experienced trauma that has left them with emotional difficulties and behaviours that challenge. The home is privately owned and forms part of a large social care organisation which offers education and therapeutic support.

The manager started in January 2021 and has recently submitted her application to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

This is the home's first inspection since it registered.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff work hard to develop and maintain strong and supportive relationships with children. One child informed the inspector that the best thing about the home is the 'staff' as they are 'kind and genuinely care about us.' The inspector observed children and staff cooking and interacting in a relaxed and friendly manner. This approach means that children make good progress in the key areas of their life.

Staff are proactive in encouraging children to attend and achieve at school. When necessary, the manager and staff advocate for children to ensure that they have every opportunity to reach their potential. Children talked positively about school, and one child informed the inspector of her aspirations to study at university. This support helps children to make progress with their learning.

Children's relationships with people who are important to them are promoted by managers and staff. In addition, staff work with children and their families to resolve areas of conflict. One child's parent described the staff team as a 'special bunch of people' who work 'therapeutically' to help their child learn. This means that children are able to spend time with their families.

Staff support children to take part in activities outside the home. For example, one child has recently completed a bike ride to raise money for charity, and another child attends gymnastics on a weekly basis. Furthermore, staff informed the inspector that they are seeking a football club for a third child following the removal of COVID-19 restrictions. These activities enhance children's self-confidence and the quality of their day-to-day experiences.

Children know how to complain and raise concerns in the home. On one occasion, when a complaint was made, the manager responded both efficiently and effectively to resolve the issues. Consequently, children feel valued and listened to.

Staff have worked hard to create a homely and personalised environment for children. For example, there are photographs of the children in all areas of the home. In contrast, there are some areas of the home in need of repair work. Furthermore, the manager was not aware of some safety hazards in the garden area. This lack of oversight has the potential to compromise children's safety.

Children do not always enjoy a positive experience when moving into the home. For example, one child recently moved into the home in an emergency, and there was damage to his bedroom carpet. The manager had not ensured that this had been replaced. As a result, the child did not experience a homely well-kept environment on arriving at the home. This does not support children to feel welcomed and valued.

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

The manager's assessment of risk to children is inconsistent. This is because they have not accurately assessed and reviewed the level of risk to children. For example, the manager considered one child's physically aggressive behaviour to be low risk despite an increase in incidents. Furthermore, some risk assessments have not been put in place for one child in a timely manner after moving into the home, despite concerns being identified in the referral paperwork. These shortfalls have the potential to compromise children's safety.

Leaders do not always have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection thresholds and referral processes. For example, following an allegation made by a child against a member of staff, the previous manager did not notify the local authority on the same day as instructed in the home's policy and procedure. Furthermore, she failed to discuss and review the incident with senior leaders, which is also directed in the policy. Consequently, a member of staff subject to the allegation remained working in the home. This potentially left the child at further risk of harm.

Leaders do not effectively assess children's risks when completing the placement planning process. For example, poor placement matching for one child who moved into the home failed to identify the potential impact on the other children. As a result, the number of significant incidents increased, and these had an impact on other children. During one of these incidents, one child informed the staff that they were afraid of another child. This means the shortfalls in the placement planning process have had an impact on children's progress and led to one child leaving the home.

Staff work hard to keep children safe by completing regular meetings and key-work sessions. These sessions provide an opportunity for children to reflect on the risks to them and how to keep themselves safe. As a result, children do not go missing from the home. This approach enhances children's feelings of safety and security.

Staff manage children's challenging behaviour effectively. On occasions, staff have been required to use physical restraint to manage significant incidents with children. These measures were used as a last resort and to keep children safe. Furthermore, the manager has ensured that staff and children have been spoken to following every incident. As a result, staff and children are able to reflect on and learn from their experiences.

Managers recruit staff safely. This means that children are cared for by adults who are clear about how to do this well.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a manager in the home who is currently working towards achieving her level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She is currently working through the registration process with Ofsted.

The manager is passionate and keeps children at the heart of all she does. She is committed to making improvements in the quality of care received by children. For example, she has introduced age-appropriate systems to track children's progress and to celebrate their achievements. This ensures that children receive a good quality of care.

There is a stable and consistent staff team in place. Staff work well together, and they have worked hard to cover gaps in the home's rota. The manager is also recruiting to the three staff vacancies in the home. This ensures that children have consistent and predictable care.

Managers provide regular supervision to all staff. This is a supportive process, which helps staff to develop their skills and understanding of the children's needs. Furthermore, the manager ensures that staff receive 'upskilling' opportunities to develop their learning. This improves the care that children receive.

The majority of staff hold the required level 3 diploma, and a small number are currently working within the specified timeframes to achieve this. Staff also complete training which is relevant and specific to the needs of children. This enables the staff to develop and apply their understanding and practice to meet the children's needs.

The manager has a good oversight of the home. She ensures that files and records are audited on a weekly basis and she understands the home's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders are also supportive and are beginning to introduce new systems to address shortfalls. For example, a new system for matching children's placements is to be embedded into the home.

The manager has submitted an up-to-date version of the home's statement of purpose. However, this does not contain sufficient detail in relation to the health professionals providing therapeutic support to children. This shortfall prevents the regulator and professionals from having clear and up-to-date information on the support received by children.

External professionals commented positively on the care received by children and the impact of the manager in the home. One professional stated, 'This is easily the best children's home I work with...' 'The manager always keeps me up to date and cares about the children.' These qualities help children to make progress in the key areas of their lives.

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 relates to the manager's assessment of risk for children when completing an impact assessment. It also relates to the manager's assessment of risk for children when assessing physical aggression and allegations.	24 June 2021
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— are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)) This specifically relates to the manager's failure to correctly follow the home's managing allegation policy and procedure following an allegation made by a child.	24 June 2021
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	24 June 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to the maintenance of the home, in particular replacing broken furniture, repairing damage to the property and ensuring that hazards are identified and removed in order to safeguard children.	
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the standard of one child’s bedroom when moving into the home in an emergency.	24 June 2021
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— 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)) This specifically relates to the fact that details for the home’s clinician are not recorded in the statement of purpose. It also fails to capture the professional qualifications and details of the supervision received by the clinician.	24 June 2021

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: 2547611

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Laura Duckers

Registered manager: Samantha Bloor

Inspector

Dean Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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