

SC011972

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to six children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It is owned and run by a private organisation. At the time of the inspection, there were six children living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since January 2012.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2023

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	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 3 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2023	Full	Good
13/10/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Good
08/08/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points. For instance, one child is now attending school full time after previously being out of school for a significant period, while one social worker reported that this has been the only stable placement that the child has had.

Children receive good-quality care, informed by well-structured care plans and assessments. When children arrive at the home, staff are guided by a wealth of relevant information to help understand the needs of the child.

Children are supported to explore their identity in a meaningful and nurturing way. One child had been helped to get some specially tailored clothing that reflects their heritage, and is supported to access local amenities that further enable them to be part of their community. Another child was being supported to explore their gender identity, with them leading staff in how they want to be supported with this.

Children are encouraged to maintain appropriate contact with their families and friends in a way that is sensitive to their individual circumstances and maximises quality time with them. One child spoke warmly about this and feels more independent because of the opportunities that they have to spend time with their friends in the community.

Staff place an importance on the education of each child and in helping them to access education regularly. One child had recently finished their exams and has started college. Staff have been effective in supporting the child to pursue their chosen career path.

Children are encouraged and supported to explore new interests and to have fun. For example, one child has taken up fishing and was described as a very good angler. Children also enjoy access to local clubs such as cadet groups and athletic groups.

Children have been instrumental in the recent redecoration of the home. They have all contributed ideas, which managers have listened to and are reflected in the renovations. Children have also chosen how to decorate their bedrooms so that they reflect the child's individual needs and personalities.

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

Children in the home feel safe. They can identify trusted adults and are happy to talk about their concerns or worries if needed.

Safeguarding arrangements in the home are clear and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities. They report that they have trust in the processes and that managers will deal effectively with any concerns.

When concerns arise, staff take appropriate action to ensure that children are kept safe and that information is correctly shared with social workers and relevant safeguarding professionals. Where appropriate, input is also sought from the organisation's clinical team to offer therapeutic advice or to support children and the team.

Staff have a good understanding of risks and vulnerabilities for children. There are clear assessments in place, and these are updated regularly and in response to incidents of concern. Staff support children in taking positive risks that support their development and independence, such as independent travel or unsupervised time in the community where appropriate.

Staff are skilled in managing challenging behaviours. When restrictive interventions are used, these are proportionate and for the least amount of time. There are discussions between children and staff that support learning from these incidents.

Recruitment processes are generally good and are in line with safer recruitment principles. On one occasion, managers had not sought relevant information from previous employers. There were also some gaps in documentation regarding issues raised in references. While the manager confirmed that these issues had been explored, there was no documentation supporting this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a clear and ambitious vision for the home. They have worked hard to ensure that the home is well equipped to deliver a good quality of care that aligns with the aims of the home.

Staff receive regular supervision that supports their practice and development. There is evidence of appropriate challenge where needed and that staff are supported to discuss children's needs and progress.

Staff receive regular training to enable them to be effective in their roles. There is a clear induction plan for new staff and ongoing training that reflects the changing needs of children, such as recent additional training in supporting sexual and gender identity.

Managers have positive relationships with the professional network. One social worker stated that they welcomed the challenge from the home if deadlines had been missed, while another stated that they could not fault the communication from the home.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of the progress that children have made, and rightly acknowledge this with children with rewards or by trusting them with unsupervised time in the community.

Children in the home feel listened to. They are confident in making suggestions and ideas about the home and that managers and staff will consider these properly. One child explained that they were now regularly attending football matches for their home team and was overjoyed to be able to give their support.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. Specifically, the manager must ensure that all relevant checks on new staff are fully carried out and well documented. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC011972

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Jodie Parker

Registered manager: Rachel Burgess

Inspector

Jay Shekleton, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023