

SC011972

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care for up to six children. Currently, only boys are accommodated. The home specialises in caring for children who have experienced trauma in their lives and may exhibit some behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2012.

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.

We last visited this setting on 3 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2019	Full	Good
08/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
10/01/2018	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from good-quality care and individualised support. Staff demonstrate that they know the children's needs well. The high levels of encouragement the children receive enable them to make positive progress in their lives.

Children are in good physical health. Meals are nutritious and well planned. Children take part in activities which promote healthy living and personal development, including swimming, horse riding and guitar lessons. They enjoy attending these varied and individualised activities.

Children build positive relationships with the staff who look after them. One child said that he 'loves it' at the home and that his key worker is 'great'. Committed staff provide the children with a secure base from which they can safely explore their feelings. As a result, the children begin to make sense of their experiences with adults who they are comfortable with and who know them well.

Children's voices are heard and their views are highly respected. One external professional said that staff listen to children and give them the 'opportunity to express themselves without feeling judged.' Children know how to complain. As a result, they feel valued and listened to.

All children are enrolled in education. Children who had not attended education before, now attend consistently. Staff liaise closely with education professionals to encourage the best outcomes for children. All children are making progress in their education.

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

Safeguarding practice is good. Staff have the knowledge and skills to report concerns without delay. The manager works effectively with the designated officer of the local authority by consulting on safeguarding matters and making relevant referrals as required. Consequently, these actions help to keep the children safe.

Staff help each child to understand how to keep safe. Group sessions around issues such as bullying, online safety and racism are well planned by staff. Key-work sessions are also planned to meet the individual needs of the child. Children engage in and are reflective in these sessions.

Staff know how to respond to children's behaviours. Following any incident of restraint, staff reflect and consider if any changes need to be made to staff practice or children's plans. There have been no episodes of children going missing from the home during this inspection period. The number of safeguarding incidents is very

low. None of the external professionals and parents spoken to raised any concerns about safeguarding practice. Staff keep children safe in this home.

Sanctions are recorded thoroughly and swiftly by the staff team. Since the previous inspection, the reflective management oversight is timelier. This ensures that there is no delay in reviewing the sanctions given to children to ensure they are fair and appropriate. The previous requirement is met.

Staff have a good understanding of the risks faced by children in their care. Risk assessments are regularly updated. Since the previous inspection, staff and children have had training around e-safety. Children's devices are now routinely checked on admission to ensure that all content is appropriate. There are clear systems in place, overseen by the manager, to ensure that online safety is a priority within this home. The previous requirement is met.

Clear planning and the regular review of practice have ensured a good level of support for children and staff throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. Overall, the home is clean and hygienic. However, in children's bathrooms, toothbrushes were loosely stored side by side. This could lead to cross-contamination and the risk of ill health to children if not addressed, particularly considering the current risk from COVID-19. The manager took immediate action to address this.

Children's bedrooms overall were clean, well decorated and individualised. One child's bedroom had a cupboard with a handle missing. This hampers the child's access to part of his own cupboard, and there was no sufficient reason given for the delay in repair.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced, child focused and passionate about her role. She has high expectations for children. This sets an aspirational culture within the staff team and their practice. Staff are well supported by the manager and their morale has improved. One staff member said, 'I haven't been so passionate about a role until working here.'

Managerial oversight is good. The manager has a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. She makes use of the independent reports to further assess the quality of care being delivered and guide development plans.

Regular communication with the wider network ensures that effective working practices continue. Transparent information-sharing results in social workers and parents being kept up to date with the children's progress. The manager is a good advocate for children and will challenge the professional practice of others if deemed necessary.

Some of the descriptive language used in a small number of children's records is not helpful to the child. An example of this was a statement, 'He will make claims that

are untrue'. This shows a lack of understanding of the importance of clear, careful record-keeping.

Timely supervision sessions and annual appraisals provide the staff with opportunities for reflection and development. All staff, including bank and waking night staff, now consistently have good-quality supervision. This ensures that all staff who work in the home receive support and guidance for their specific roles. The previous requirement is met. However, not all supervision and appraisal documents are dated and signed. This could lead to a conflict in practice issues if not formally agreed by both supervisor and supervisee, which could have an impact on children's care.

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 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))	22 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions is kept and ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a signed and dated copy of the record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Sadie Dangerfield

Registered manager: Rachel Burgess

Inspector

Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

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