

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC011972
Inspector	James Harmon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Hillcrest Childrens Services Limited
Registered person address	Langstone Gate Solent Road HAVANT Hampshire PO9 1TR
Responsible individual	William Mathew Crosby
Registered manager	Clifton James Soares / Rachel Jane Burgess
Date of last inspection	23/10/2014

Inspection date	16/02/2015
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Previous inspection	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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During the past year the parent company has experienced a change in ownership, which has required some cultural change for staff. Since the last inspection an acting manager has covered the maternity leave of the permanent registered manager and has positively influenced the overall effectiveness of the service. The service has met the previous recommendation of the last inspection.

A high number of staff left due to the changes instilled into the service by the new provider. A major change consisted of staff working two days on and three days off rather than split shifts resulting in low staff morale prior to the change. The registered manager left in November 2014, resulting in a period in the home where there was no management overview to ensure that documentation pertaining to the care of the young people was being completed according to regulation. Some staff prior to leaving the service failed to document significant incidents accordingly.

The registered manager has recently returned and she is leading the team with a real sense of purpose. Young people feel safe and have established positive relationships with staff. The leadership and management recognised the shortcomings in the service for the previous two months and have already taken appropriate steps to improve upon this.

This home has been a safe and effective one for young people, during a period of significant change. Two minor recommendations are made as a result of this inspection, relating to the proportionate use of sanctions and smoking cessation.

Full report

Information about this children's home

A private organisation owns and manages this home. The home offers residential placements for up to six children of either sex, who are between the ages of eight and 16 years. It specialises in providing therapeutic care for children who have experienced trauma in their lives and display a variety of behavioural problems.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2014	Interim	sustained effectiveness
14/01/2014	Interim	good progress
13/06/2013	Full	outstanding
23/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable, and fair and are understood by all staff and children, and specifically that consequences are proportionate (NMS 3.8)
- promote a healthy lifestyle, in particular smoking cessation. (NMS 6.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Considering the starting points of young people, there is significant progress made in education. A young person not in formal education has successfully obtained a one-year apprenticeship which has led to an increase in their self-esteem and social interaction for a young person.

Young people that prior to residing in the home experienced behavioural difficulties, including criminal activity have successfully stopped engaging in these behaviours. A young person said, 'since moving into the home, I recognized that I don't need to act out anymore. I have been in many homes but I feel calm here, bad behaviour is not necessary.'

The overall health needs of young people are of a good standard. Some young people smoke cigarettes and would benefit from robust efforts to educate the young person on the potential health implications when considering their own individual health needs. Prompt referrals and good communication with CAMHS allows young people to access the service quickly resulting in positive outcomes.

Contact arrangements with family and significant others are of good quality, staff are proactive in communicating and establishing relationships with family members which enables safe contact arrangements to be made. Transporting and supervising contact arrangements are routinely undertaken by staff ensuring that young people benefit from full use of agreed contact time.

Young people make a positive contribution to the wider community for example by participation in charity events or working and undertaking activities in the community. Young people contribute positively to the home by undertaking chores such as setting and clearing the table after dinner.

Young people have some independent skills such as traveling alone and receive support to develop these. In instances where young people are reluctant and slow to develop skills such as proper hygiene and managing finances, structured work has not been undertaken with the young people causing a delay in overall independent skills being developed.

Quality of care **outstanding**

Staff promote and contribute significantly to the care and planning for young people, by completing individualised care plans. Young people are aware of their planning and sign their care plans in acknowledgement. Communication with

professionals is very good, a placing social worker's supervisor advised that the home communicates in a timely manner and reports no concerns about the service, while being happy with the care of the young person.

Young people enjoy positive, nurturing relationships with the staff allowing open and honest discussions of positive and negative aspects of their care. Staff are experienced, well trained and have ample knowledge of the needs of the young people in the home. A staff member reported that the new rota consisting of working two days on and three days off provides consistency and allows staff the time to develop relationships with the young people. The staff member said, 'there is no clock watching as with split shift when you're on shift, you know you're here for two days and can focus on the young people.' A young person said, 'the new staff rota has been great because if you have a bad day and a particular staff member was dealing with it, you know they will be on shift when you awake in the morning.'

Key-working sessions with young people have been the focus of some improvement. Key working sessions have involved young people focusing on a variety of topics without any formal structure to address each issue in full detail. The acting manager has planned a formal two day key-working training session for staff to improve the quality of this work.

Complaints are very seldom made by young people but are taken seriously, young people know how to make complaints and are able to express their views to staff either directly or anonymously by placing a note in the suggestion/complaint box. One young person expressed, 'staff are always attempting to talk and find out how they are feeling which feels good to know someone cares'. The views of young people are essential to the running of the home, the input of all young people is sought in regards to their desired activities, menus, and the interior of the home specifically individual bedrooms.

There are wide ranges of activities undertaken by young people, for example participating in a local football league or attending the movies.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people said that they feel safe in the home and under the guidance of staff. Few incidents of a safeguarding nature occur for young people residing in the home. Staff are able to demonstrate their understanding of safeguarding and have completed relevant training. When issues do arise the safeguarding policy is accessible and displayed in the home for staff to consult. There have been no safeguarding issues reported to the local authority children's services and rarely does a young person go missing. When a young person has gone missing they have returned quickly; staff follow a comprehensive missing person policy and have an individualised missing person plan for each young person.

Young people that have resided in the home for an extended period very seldom have physical interventions. The number of incidents involving physical interventions has decreased recently; these typically occur due to a young person being new to the home and having difficulty adjusting. A young person expressed that they understood why staff intervened and felt assisted because staff discussed each incident before and after.

The consequence/ sanctions policy is currently being reviewed by the registered manager as on occasion sanctions did not appear to be appropriate response to the young people's behaviour. Young people themselves did not express a negative view of sanctions and believes sanctions to be fair.

New members of staff recruited to work with young people undertake a thorough recruitment process consisting of an interview, new Disclosure and Barring Service check and references. This was evidenced by the recruitment file of a new starter.

The home is appropriately located and offers a secure recently refurbished environment detailed in a robust location risk assessment which covers the surrounding community and its impact on young people.

Leadership and management

good

Recently the acting manager left the home which caused lack of management oversight for a short period. An acting manager from another home in the network started in early January 2015 and provided leadership and oversight to the staff until the registered manager returned from maternity leave in the first week in February 2015. There is now a consistent leadership and management in the home which has really motivated staff as a evident by the high quality of care given to young people.

The acting manager has been with the provider for over ten years and in this short period he has come into the home and identified areas of the service that need improvement while being a positive influence on the young people and staff. Now that the registered manager has returned the service will once again have a consistent manager to oversee the care of young people and staff. There is a plan for the home to be jointly managed until the acting manager completes the registration for another home in the network.

The independent visitor undertakes routine and timely visits to the home that is very critical of the home while highlighting positives. A plan of action is developed after each visit and monitored for progress. The young people views are often sought and included in regulation 33 reports allowing their voice to influence the operation of the home.

The leadership and management are already incorporating the new regulations into the service, The two year development plan currently underway is very forward

thinking and robust. The development plan looks to make improvements in areas of the service for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.