

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC011972
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd
Registered provider address	Langstone Gate, Solent Road, Havant PO9 1TR

Responsible individual	Mark Birkbeck
Registered manager	Rachel Burgess
Inspector	Ruth Coler

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC011972

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have positive relationships with staff which support them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Young people are encouraged to voice their opinions, which staff value and respect. This helps young people to develop a sense of belonging and to speak about difficult issues in their lives.
- Staff organise opportunities for young people to learn to look after themselves at a pace which takes account of their age, development, histories, strengths and views.
- Opportunities to celebrate and reward young people's good behaviour and achievements are identified and taken whenever possible.
- Varied and enriching activities enhance young people's lives.
- Staff identify, anticipate and manage problems effectively.
- Safeguarding practice enhances young people's safety, and staff respond appropriately to child protection concerns.
- Managers support staff to reflect on their care practice and develop further skills which support young people to progress.
- Staff work as a team and are skilled in supporting young people.
- Additional information regarding complaints is needed in the statement of purpose, so that everyone is clear how to make a complaint, should they need to do so.
- Recommendations are also made to review certain elements of practice in relation to the premises, training and recording. See the recommendation section for more information.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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. In particular, the provider must ensure that the statement includes detail of how any person can make a complaint about the home; including who they can contact to do so.	31/05/17

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff understand the difference between an agreed behaviour management strategy and a consequence. There should be clarity about whether there is any overlap between these two actions, for example whether a consequence can be given as a result of a behaviour management strategy.
- The registered person should ensure that the home's location assessment identifies all risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and outlines appropriate strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the assessment covers any risks presented by the busy main road adjacent to the home.
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the workforce plan is reviewed when considering admitting a young person, to ensure that staff skills fully match their needs. Where these do not, plans should be made to ensure that any deficit is met as soon as possible.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately operated children's home. It may accommodate up to six children, irrespective of gender. It specialises in caring for children who have experienced trauma in their lives and may exhibit some behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/03/2016	Full	Good
12/08/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/02/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children progress and develop well here. Many of the young people gave the home 10 out of 10 as a place to live and talked positively about how staff look after them. Staff build warm, friendly and consistent relationships which young people appreciate. These relationships provide young people with secure bases from which they can make progress in all areas of their lives. The young people here make particularly good progress in relation to their difficult behaviours. Young people's individuality and particular needs are well considered and understood. Of particular note is the staff's attention to ensuring that equality is effectively identified and supported for all young people. Care plans for each young person detail clearly how any needs that they may have in relation to their ethnicity, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation are being met. Young people's education is promoted and prioritised successfully. Young people's involvement with education improves, and this assists them to learn well and develop ambition for their futures. Support for educational achievements is commensurate to young people's needs. For example, additional tutoring is provided to support young people when they take exams or if they are struggling with coursework. The activities that young people engage in are varied and diverse. The activities available reflect young people's interests, and staff also encourage young people to explore different activities whenever possible. This enables young people to explore and develop a wide range of interests and increase their friendship groups in the local community. Young people say that this is the best thing about living here. Developing good health and a healthy lifestyle are promoted well. Staff help young people's health to improve by providing and encouraging young people to eat a more varied and healthy diet and by increasing their participation in physical activity. Where young people's health needs are of concern, staff act quickly. They involve external health partners in identifying the health need and advocate for the right support to be provided. Helping young people to have a voice and participate in how they are cared for is firmly embedded in staff practice. Well-organised systems for gaining young people's views take account of their differing ages and preferences in communication. Young people are clear how they can make their views known and receive feedback on what happens regarding any suggestions that they make.	

They are helped to participate in their review meetings and to make their views known. One young person said he that could say what he wanted to here, and felt that what he said would be respected.

Contact with young people's family and friends is promoted and supported. Any contact that the staff supervise is recorded well, providing detail on what occurs during the parent's time with their child. One parent was positive about the support provided during contact, while another made a complaint, but no breach of regulation was found in relation to this complaint.

Young people move into the home well and move on to a different home successfully. Staff carefully plan and monitor how young people are, adjusting their care as they find out about a young person and the young person finds out about living at the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are protected and supported to protect themselves by staff who know them well, and who understand and act on any safeguarding or welfare concern. The staff provide strong, consistent, behavioural boundaries and take every opportunity that they can to praise young people for their good behaviour. They also support young people to reflect on the reasons for any difficult behaviour and how they can manage these more effectively. Staff understand the importance of monitoring for signs of child sexual exploitation, and undertake risk assessments to understand and minimise any risks that young people might face. Staff work well together as a team to consider how best to manage any difficult behaviours, and therefore successfully deescalate situations and decrease the use of control measures, such as restraint, effectively. Well-written risk assessments are available to support consistent action by staff in response to any risks identified. However, these are not always kept as up to date as needed when risks change. This means that staff guidance does not always match a young person's current needs. However, staff do understand what action to take through the home's regular daily communication systems, therefore the impact of this omission is minimal. Restraint is used and, at times, this can be frequent. However, monitoring records show that this decreases over time and that the reasons, such as a child being new to the home, are known.	

Incident recording is well organised and simple to follow. The records are clear in showing both how an incident unfolded and the actions taken to manage it. However, some staff have misunderstood the difference between consequences and behaviour management strategies and, while no issues are noted which have adversely affected a young person, this leaves potential for staff to misunderstand guidance or record incidents erroneously.

Recruitment is well organised and follows rigorous procedures which protect young people from being cared for by unsuitable adults.

The home has a location assessment which covers the general area in which the home is situated, detailing both positive and negative aspects of the locality and how any concerns will be addressed. It does not make any reference to the busy road where the home is located. While no incidents have occurred, this is an important feature of this home. The off-road parking area has a low-level fence which leads onto this road, and some young people are finding it difficult to transfer from home to outside activities, and their behavioural difficulties increase while getting into the car.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
An appropriately qualified manager is in post. She is passionate about developing a service which focuses on young people and places importance on giving them as homely an experience as possible. She leads and manages well, working effectively with a strong management team that provides good role models for the behaviours it wishes its staff to replicate. The staff are complimentary about the management team's support and appreciates the way it works with them to support young people's needs. The whole staff team demonstrated and showed a commitment to developing and providing a consistently good service to young people, and a strong desire to support young people to overcome the adversities of their past and develop well in all aspects of their lives. There are sufficient staff on duty to meet young people's needs. Usually there are three to four staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the five young people who live here. This level of staffing allows for different activities to be accessed by young people. Staff are carefully inducted into their roles, and are supported by the whole team to understand the needs of the young people and how to meet these. New staff shadow experienced staff before becoming part of the core number on duty. This provides new members of staff with a good opportunity to learn and ask questions	

about the home in a safe way and to absorb knowledge before they take up their responsibilities in full.

Staff training is varied and meaningful. Staff could explain how training had positively supported their practice to improve and develop in line with their role and level of responsibility. Records also showed that each member of staff had regular training to update or improve their knowledge and understanding. For example, those staff with managerial responsibility were undertaking courses in relation to their management role. However, training is not always reviewed in the light of the needs of a child who is new to the home. Therefore, the opportunity is not always taken to check that all staff have the relevant skills to meet any specific needs that a young person may have.

The statement of purpose is comprehensive, well written and clear. However, it provides information only about how complaints by young people will be dealt with. It lacks information about how complaints from anybody else, such as professionals or parents, will be managed and whom a complainant can contact in the wider organisation if they have a concern.

The management team has good systems in place to continuously monitor staff practice and improve the services provided. This has led to development plans to provide a chalet in the garden for use for quiet study, hold therapy sessions on site and improve how staff supervision sessions are recorded. Staff meetings are also used to consider practice and ensure that the staff team can air and deal with issues effectively, as well as celebrate young people's and staff's achievements.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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