

SC398385

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children who have experienced trauma which has left them with emotional difficulties and associated challenging behaviours. The home is privately owned and forms part of a large social care organisation which offers education and therapeutic support.

The manager was registered with Ofsted to manage the home in February 2017.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 November 2019

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: 6 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2018	Full	Good
19/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/06/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, make immediate arrangements to ensure that the fire doors are not propped open in accordance with the home's fire risk assessment.	06/12/2019
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2))	03/01/2020

Recommendations

- Staff should provide a nurturing and supportive environment that is homely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

In particular, for managers to keep a record of supervision and annual appraisal discussions for all staff.

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's

homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good home where children feel safe and valued.

There are strong relationships between children and staff. Children told the inspector that they feel cared for and listened to by staff. These relationships are the foundations by which the children make progress.

Two children attend education full time and are making good progress. This is a significant improvement from their starting points. The third child, who struggles in the school environment, has home tuition and is responding to this.

Staff consult children at weekly meetings, through day-to-day conversations and targeted key-work sessions. Children benefit from this inclusive approach of being involved with planning their care.

Staff take children to see their families and friends. Sometimes this involves travelling long distances to ensure that these relationships continue.

Staff encourage children's friendships outside of the home and promote links with the community, such as getting involved in charity work. This broadens their social opportunities and adds to their feeling of being part of the community.

Children take part in a broad range of activities, both at home and in the community. Staff support these activities, which enhance the strong relationships between the staff and children.

The home specialises in providing long-term care for children who have complex needs. One child has moved out since the last inspection in a planned and structured way. This was successful because of the skills and knowledge the child gained while living at the home.

The home is in a rural setting. It is well decorated throughout, and the children can decorate their rooms as they wish. However, there are parts of the home that look tired. For example, the external fascia boards are worn and there are cracked paving slabs. This detracts from what is otherwise a welcoming and nurturing home.

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

Children told the inspector that they feel safe. They have staff that they can talk to if they need to. Children all said that staff listen to them. Staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to raise any safeguarding concerns.

Episodes of children going missing are rare. If children go missing, staff follow comprehensive missing-from-home risk assessments which are developed and agreed with placing authorities. Staff follow children and search the local area if they lose sight of them.

Staff support children to develop their understanding of risk. Discussion and reflection are routine parts of the day-to-day care at this home. The organisation's forensic psychologist attends fortnightly team meetings, offers advice and guidance and undertakes direct work with individual children, when needed. Staff utilise this resource to good effect.

There have been several changes in the staff team since the last inspection. Comprehensive organisational processes mean that safer recruitment checks are undertaken to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited.

Meaningful key-working sessions are offered to children regularly, where important topics are covered such as self-harm, education and independence skills. These are discussed openly and honestly with children.

After a recent assessment of fire safety by an external agent, it was acknowledged that some of the fire doors did not close properly. One of the fire doors is still due to be fixed. However, at the time of the inspection two of the fire doors downstairs were propped open and door props were found upstairs in the children's bedrooms. This is a potential risk to children and staff.

The home is set within a large garden and surrounded by countryside. The home's location risk assessment considers risks in the local area. However, the mitigation of risk is not sufficiently detailed. Local risks posed by the busy road the property sits on and the nearby motorway are not considered. Risks posed by local waterways are identified but mitigating these risks, for example by children being able to swim, is not considered. Therefore, the assessment of local risks to children is ineffective.

The children can, at times, display challenging and aggressive behaviours. The staff de-escalate such behaviours to good effect. There are times when the staff need to physically intervene to keep children safe. These interventions are appropriate and proportionate. The staff and the children reflect on incidents after they have occurred. This lessens the likelihood of reoccurrence. However, recording of essential safeguarding records requires attention. It is difficult to understand what happened during such episodes without relying on staff to give commentary. This would render these records redundant if they needed to be referred to in years to come.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager of the home has the relevant level 4 qualification and has the skills and experience to manage the home effectively. The manager receives support from a skilled and experienced deputy manager.

The management team and staff have a good knowledge of the children. Managers and staff understand children's needs and the progress that they are making.

The manager completes assessments to consider the potential compatibility of children who may move into the home. This ensures that the manager only agrees for children to move into the home when staff can meet their needs and they are compatible with the children currently living in the home.

Feedback from external professionals and family members is good. They speak positively about the quality of the service and staff, and the difference the service is making. One professional said, 'The staff are amazing. They attend professionals' meetings and take [the child] to all appointments. They are quick to respond and take on board advice. Most importantly, they genuinely care about the children.'

The manager ensures that staff receive training to support them in their roles. He ensures that all staff receive regular, practice-led supervisions and appraisals in line with organisational policy. However, only the last several months of the manager's own supervision notes are recorded, and the most recent annual appraisal could not be located during the inspection. This can lead to confusion and errors occurring by not being able to review these documents.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC398385

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Registered provider address: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester,
Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Samantha Millward

Registered manager: Mark Duckers

Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy, social care inspector

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