

SC398393

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for up to three children who have experienced early childhood trauma. A large private organisation operates this home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2019. He holds a level 4 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 20 July and 11 August 2021

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 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2020	Full	Good
04/12/2018	Full	Good
09/05/2017	Full	Good
29/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children lived in the home. One of these children left the home during the inspection as a result of a planned move to supported accommodation. Two of the children have lived at the home for over four years. This stability has enabled them to make good progress. The staff teach children independent living skills. As a result, children are well prepared for future independent living.

Children have good relationships with staff who they know care about them. The home has a warm and welcoming feel. Improvements have been made to the garden area. This now includes a vegetable garden which supports children to grow, prepare and try new vegetables. In addition, staff have also created a fairy garden, which includes a seating area where children can relax. This provides children with a space for quiet reflection.

Children have good school attendance. When children find education difficult, staff work in partnership with education providers to find creative ways of supporting them. This has resulted in children engaging more with their learning. Staff have supported children with college applications and when obstacles have presented, they have advocated in the best interests of the child. For example, one child's education, health and care plan did not reflect the progress that the child had made. Staff made sure this was reviewed with the college so that an accurate assessment of the child's educational support needs could be made.

Staff support children to stay in touch with people who are important to them. One child has a girlfriend. The manager and staff have worked exceptionally hard to build a relationship with her and her mother. This is because staff know that this is an important part of supporting the child to build safe and healthy relationships. The child told the inspector, '[The manager] has helped me with my relationship with my girlfriend, he has got to know her and her mum too.' This proactive approach has contributed to good risk management.

Staff spend time with children and encourage their hobbies and interests. One child has a keen interest in attending BMX tracks. Staff researched local BMX tracks and sourced a BMX club for the child to join. Another child was supported to attend Rangers, an activity club. Investment in children's interests has been particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic when access to community activities has been more limited.

When children move out of the home, this is managed well, even in challenging circumstances. Staff are committed to making this a positive experience for children. One child faced a period of isolation as a result of COVID-19 before moving out of the home. Despite this, the child still had a positive move into supported

accommodation. This is because staff advocate well for children to ensure they receive individualised support when they move on from the home.

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

Staff have a good understanding of children's risks and behaviours. This helps staff to keep children safe. As result, children rarely go missing and staff do not often need to restrain children to keep them and others safe. Incidents in the home are low. This contributes to a safe and stable environment for children.

Children benefit from consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them. A child-centred approach, focused on attunement, helps children to explore their feelings safely. The use of rewards and consequences helps children to feel safe and behave positively. The manager reviews behaviour management records and takes action when he does not feel a response is appropriate. As a result, children feel safe to explore their emotions and staff quickly pick up on children's cues when they are not themselves.

Staff undertake direct work with children to help educate them about a variety of risks. This helps children to understand how to keep themselves safe both now and in the future. For example, staff educate children about bullying and have taken a creative approach to teaching children about risks online. The has included teaching children about their digital footprint and using well-regarded resources to educate children about different apps.

The registered manager has good oversight of recruitment practice. He ensures that all staff are assessed in line with safer recruitment practice. This means that children's safety is promoted and all staff are suitable to work with children.

There have been a number of potential safeguarding incidents relating to online safety since the last inspection. There are some monitoring systems in place to pick up on issues which help to help keep children safe online. These include a parental control app that enables tracking, blocking and monitoring of children's online usage. When the app highlights potential concerns and incidents have occurred, the manager and staff respond appropriately to ensure that additional measures are in place to safeguard children.

Risk assessments are in place for each child and these link to behaviour management plans effectively. However, risk management strategies are not always clear for staff or recorded sufficiently. On one occasion, the manager did not update the risk assessment to ensure that staff were provided with clear guidance about how to manage a particular issue. There is also a lack of guidance about undertaking and recording checks on children's mobile phones and games consoles over and above the protection provided by the parental control app. Over-reliance on the parental control app to manage children's online safety may mean that risks to children are not always monitored and reviewed regularly. These omissions left a child exposed to online risks vulnerable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A child-focused manager leads a consistent staff team. He has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and is committed to improving the experiences for children. The manager is ambitious for the children and wants the best for them. He has an excellent understanding of the children, their needs and the progress they make.

Children receive consistent care from a stable staff team. They have a diverse range of interest and skills. The skills of the team enhance relationships between staff and the children. One member of staff taught a child how to build a fence. An independent reviewing officer told the inspector, 'The staff team who seem to have a wide range of interests and skills have ensured that [child's name] has had access to lots of activities which he enjoys'.

Staff speak positively about the manager. They say he is very approachable. Staff receive regular supervision that helps them reflect on practice. In particular, the manager has been keen to embed the 'playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy' model of parenting into practice. He has used supervision as an opportunity to reflect on this model with staff and the impact it has on children's care. This keeps staff motivated and focused on the way they respond to children's needs.

The manager has formed good relationships with external stakeholders. One social worker said that the communication is excellent and that staff 'have a holistic and multi-agency approach towards risk which makes their risk management effective'. Staff communicate any identified risks with all appropriate professionals and they include professionals in formulating risk management plans. This coordinated approach helps to ensure positive outcomes for children.

The manager is committed to ensuring that children's views and participation remain central to work completed with them. Children's plans are child-focused and one section is written from the child's perspective. The manager has developed a 'monthly outcomes' meeting where children have an opportunity to reflect on the previous month with staff. Recently, children's views were sought when they had to isolate for a long period as a result of COVID-19. Staff were committed to improving this experience for children despite it being difficult for them. This positive practice helps to remind children that staff care about their views.

The staff team has access to a wide range of training. However, records do not give an accurate overview of the training that staff have received. This means that there are gaps in training records which indicate staff may not have had the training they need to meet children's individual needs.

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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)) The specifically relates to ensuring risk assessments are updated with relevant information, ensuring staff have the information they need to manage risk, and that this is reflected within recording systems.	24/09/2021
The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	24/09/2021

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)(h))

This specifically relates to ensuring there are enough staff that are trained to meet the children's needs, and that this is accurately reflected within the registered manager's monitoring systems.

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: SC398393

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

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

Responsible individual: Mark Duckers

Registered manager: Jonathan Bagnall

Inspectors

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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