

SC398480

Registered provider: Hillcrest Childrens Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large private company owns this children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2025 and is suitably qualified for the role.

Inspection dates: 30 September and 1 October 2025

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: 22 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2024	Full	Good
13/02/2024	Full	Good
01/03/2023	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children live in the home. One child has lived in the home for six years. Since the last inspection, two children have moved in, and one child has moved out. The inspector spoke with three children, who shared their views of the home. The remaining child provided their feedback via a questionnaire. Children are making good progress and have positive experiences.

Children's moves in and out of the home are well managed and handled sensitively. When a child had an unplanned move under difficult circumstances, staff ensured that they had a positive ending. Staff took the time to ensure that the child's time was celebrated and there were opportunities to say goodbye. The child received gifts and a memory book. Staff made sure the child met staff at their new home before moving in and worked with the child in their new home to help the child settle in. This support helps children to feel reassured during difficult moments in their lives.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills. For example, one child has recently started college and is now travelling independently and accessing free time. Potential risks have been considered to help maintain the child's safety, and the child regularly communicates with staff so that they know the child is safe. The child said that 'all staff do their best to support me. [Name of Manager] is doing a great job and helping me with my independence.' A family member also said, 'I'm watching her flourish, she's a happy girl.' This support ensures that children develop the skills and confidence to thrive when they move on from the home.

Staff understand the importance of education and support children to engage. All children living in the home are in education and have good levels of attendance. Staff ensure that children are appropriately prepared and equipped for school. Educational professionals say there is good communication with staff and leaders, which helps them to best support children and maintain their ongoing engagement and progress.

Children's health needs are generally well supported. Children are registered with local health services and staff ensure that children attend their routine health appointments. However, for one child there has been slow progress in ensuring that specialist support is provided for their specific health condition. In addition, they have not received a timely health review. These delays could have an adverse impact on the child's health and well-being in the longer term.

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

Children say they feel safe, happy and feel listened to in the home. Children have developed trusting relationships with staff. There are clear routines and boundaries in place which help children to feel safe and secure.

Staff make use of incentives to help children to make positive choices. Each child has individualised goals that they work towards in exchange for rewards. This helps children to understand behaviour that will help them to progress.

Staff are skilled at supporting children when they are distressed. Incidents in the home are minimal. When they do happen, they are well managed. Physical interventions are used as a last resort to keep children safe and when used are appropriate and proportionate. Children and staff have opportunities to reflect on incidents which helps everyone to learn and move on.

Children know how to raise concerns. When children move into the home they are informed of the complaints process. Staff hold regular discussions with children in which they are given the opportunity to raise any concerns. As a result, children are confident that they can raise concerns when they need to and that they will be taken seriously.

Safe recruitment processes are in place. Appropriate checks are carried out on new staff before they work at the home. This ensures that children are cared for by suitably vetted staff.

Overall, the home's environment is child centred. Children's rooms are personalised, and staff enjoy meals together. However, despite some recent refurbishment, the home looks tired with damaged paintwork and furniture, one door does not easily close and lock to provide adequate privacy. There are also hazards that could be viewed as potential ligature risks, and a window without necessary restrictions. These shortfalls have the potential to compromise children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the children. They know the children well and support them to achieve and have positive experiences. Feedback from professionals about the home is very positive. One professional said, 'It is a fantastic home, good therapeutic approach.'

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. When the registered manager came into post six months ago, they faced significant staffing challenges which they have successfully addressed with minimal impact on the children. Children said that they liked all the staff, and one family member described the home as 'getting better and better.'

Staff say that they are well supported by leaders and managers. They receive regular opportunities through supervision to discuss their training and development needs. Staff speak fondly about working in the home. One member of staff said, 'It's like a family, the kids smile and laugh, I love it - it's the best part.'

Staff receive regular training opportunities to equip them with the skills needed to support children in their care. New staff undergo a comprehensive induction training programme and, on completion of their probation, are supported to obtain a qualification

in residential childcare. However, not all staff have completed training which would be beneficial to children's specific needs.

Children's views and wishes are actively sought, and children say they feel listened to. Staff provide children with opportunities to enable children to have input into the running of the home including the weekly food shop, activities and the decoration of the home. However, there is a lack of management oversight of children's views and feedback on reasonable requests is not always responded to in a timely manner. This does not help children to always feel heard.

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, The 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)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that shortfalls and hazards in the environment are addressed without delay to keep children safe. It also relates to areas of the home that are looking tired and worn and in need of a refresh.	30 November 2025
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they actively challenge the relevant authorities and services when there are delays to children receiving services required to meet their needs. This specifically relates to the delay in one child receiving support for their health needs.	30 November 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the care that they receive, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. This specifically relates to the lack of timely response given to reasonable requests made by children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and leaders should understand the role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This specifically relates to the registered person maintaining good oversight of training to ensure staff are up to date in training that is specific to children's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: SC398480

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Childrens Services (2) Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Rachael Strange

Registered manager: Liam Titley

Inspector

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector

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