

SC461275

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 privately run home offers support, education and therapeutic care for up to two children who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma which has left them vulnerable.

The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in January 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 20 October 2021 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/12/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There is currently one child living at this home. Although the child has made progress since moving to the home, further progress has been hindered by insufficient staffing. Furthermore, staff have failed to show the necessary professional curiosity, which has resulted in a significant safeguarding incident.

The child was welcomed into the home in a careful and planned manner. There was a transition plan in place and the child had the opportunity to meet staff. The child was also provided with a welcome guide to the home which included photographs of the staff. This demonstrates child-centered practice.

In contrast, the manager has not ensured that transition planning for a child leaving the home has been child-centered. The child was provided with significant information shortly before he went to visit a new placement. This did not consider the needs of the child or provide the child with the opportunity to process the information. As a result, the child was confused and overwhelmed by the placement visit.

Staff and managers support the child to engage and achieve in their education. The child is expected to obtain higher than average grades in English and mathematics, as well as a distinction in a BTEC qualification. The child is also developing their independence skills and is encouraged to cook and clean their room. As a result, the child is achieving positive outcomes that are preparing him for the next stage in his life.

The child engages in a variety of activities, and staff support him to pursue his interests. The child is a member of an American football team and attends activities with staff. Staff and managers are aware of the child's interests and encourage these. This provides the child with enjoyment and promotes his sense of identity.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle in the home. When there are concerns about the child's health, staff support the child to attend appointments. When results from a health test were received, staff undertook a key-working session to provide him with appropriate information and knowledge. This supports the child to learn to manage his health needs independently.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff do not consistently respond to risk. For example, staff did not show sufficient professional curiosity in relation to the child's whereabouts when out having contact with family. The risk assessment in place was not clear on the supervision levels required for contact, and staff did not identify or respond to potential risk factors. As

a result, staff did not take appropriate action to safeguard the child and others present during the family contact. This has led to an allegation of indecent exposure against the child.

Following this incident, the manager updated plans and risk assessments relating to contact and associated behaviour. Action in response to the allegation was appropriate, with relevant agencies being notified. The child was placed on increased observations when he returned to the home in order to maintain his safety.

The manager has not ensured that safer recruitment processes are followed. This places children at potential risk of harm as staff have not been appropriately vetted.

When the child made an allegation, managers treated the child's concerns seriously and appropriate action was taken. This demonstrates that the child was listened to and responded to, which helps the child to feel safe.

Positive behaviour is promoted. Certificates are provided to the child in response to positive behaviour. There is a personalised monthly newsletter that highlights what the child has been involved in that month. This has a positive impact on the child's identity and self-worth.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager monitors the quality of the care provided at the home. She uses monitoring tools to ensure that the progress of children, the health and safety at the home and the supervision of staff are kept under review. However, this has not been effective in ensuring that shortfalls are addressed.

The manager has a good understanding of the child and is proactive in liaising with the social worker. The manager speaks about the child with warmth and advocates on their behalf. This includes taking appropriate action to escalate concerns to the child's placing authority in relation to assessment of the level of restrictions placed on him. However, despite raising her concerns in the first instance, the manager did not continue to escalate her concerns or challenge the placing authority. As a result, the child has restrictions placed on their liberty that have not been formally assessed.

The home is not appropriately staffed. The use of agency staff is high which means that the home does not have a consistent staff team. This has had an impact on the quality of care provided to the child. It has prevented him from developing in some aspects of his life, such as acquiring the skills to be able to use a knife when cooking.

Despite core staff having completed relevant and mandatory training, insufficient staffing has meant a high use of agency staff who have not all received training relevant to the role. Also, one core staff member is yet to complete required training

such as first aid and physical restraint training. Therefore, children are not consistently cared for by fully trained staff.

Staff have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice. They receive regular supervision that considers the child. In addition, team meetings take place frequently and include discussions about the child. There is also input from the clinical team in team meetings. This supports staff to develop their skills and knowledge. However, on occasion, supervision has not been used effectively to explore staff's decision-making during incidents. This is a missed opportunity to develop staff's practice and improve the quality of care provided to the child.

The manager has not ensured that the rota contains the required information. This document does not reflect the hours worked by all staff members. Therefore, the regulator cannot be assured that the child has been suitably and safely cared for.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— 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(c)) In particular, the registered manager is to continue to escalate their concerns until they receive a satisfactory response.	8 October 2021
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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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)(iii)(v))	8 October 2021

In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that all risk assessments provide clear guidance for staff and that staff have the skills to assess risk.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that there are sufficient staff in place who have the training and skills to meet the needs of children. Also, the registered manager is to use their monitoring and review systems effectively to bring about continuous improvements in the quality of care children receive.	8 October 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that—	8 October 2021

the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that all the required checks of agency staff are completed when they are recruited.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; Other records with respect to children's homes A copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a), (Schedule 4 (3)) In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that all staff working in the home are on the rota.	8 October 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that agency staff have received appropriate training and that training records are made available. This includes the qualification in regulation 32(4). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should ensure that transitions from the home are well planned and that children are well supported, as the home has an important role in supporting each child leaving the home in the period immediately before their departure. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)

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: SC461275

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: Laura Duckers

Registered manager: Sheryl Bayley

Inspector

Melanie Griffin, Social Care Inspector

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