

# SC482296

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to eight children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager has been in post since October 2023. She is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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:** 28 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 28/02/2023      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 04/10/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 10/09/2019      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 03/10/2018      | Full            | Outstanding          |

## Inspection judgements

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

There has been significant staff turnover since the last inspection. Consequently, children have not experienced consistent care from a stable group of adults and have had some poor experiences of care.

Shortfalls had developed in the quality of care being provided to children before the recent changes to the management team. Improvements being made by the manager are recent and not yet embedded. As a result, it is too early to see the impact on achieving consistently good care and outcomes for children.

Managers have been unable to meet the needs of all the children at the home and this has resulted in an unplanned ending for one child. Staff have not consistently ensured that recommendations from health assessments have been progressed, meaning that important medical investigations have not taken place. The manager is now ensuring that action is taken to provide support for health needs without further delay.

Children's wishes and feelings about the way the home is run have not routinely been sought. Until recently, key-work sessions were not carried out in line with agreed timescales. Now that they have been restarted, children have told staff that they value having a say in the way that they are looked after. For example, children have been involved in identifying goals which are important to them and the steps they need to take to achieve them.

All children are attending education and are supported by staff to access additional learning opportunities. One child has recently been suspended from school and there is a bespoke package in place for them to learn at home. The manager recognises that this approach does not offer the child the best educational experience and is committed to working with relevant agencies to identify a suitable education placement as soon as possible.

Work is underway to make improvements which modernise the home. Children are being supported to decorate their bedrooms in a way which reflects their talents and interests. They are also helping to choose how communal areas will look, which gives them a sense of belonging and pride in their surroundings.

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

Due to the inconsistent staffing arrangements since the last inspection, children have not developed reliable, trusting relationships with adults who they can speak to if they are worried about their own safety and well-being. The manager

demonstrates sound awareness of the negative impact this has had on children's protection and sense of security.

The manager is making sure that staff are working in line with the therapeutic approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. There is a child-focused, sensitive approach to teaching children the most appropriate coping strategies to help them manage their emotions. This contrasts with the previous approach to behaviour management, which was punitive at times.

The arrangements for children moving into the home are not sufficiently robust, particularly when considering the impact on the children who already live in the home. As a result, children experience instability when there are changes to the group, which increases the risk of placement breakdowns.

Managers demonstrate sound understanding of the need to notify Ofsted about all serious events. They are working effectively with the staff team to ensure that there is an appropriate response to safeguarding concerns. However, before the manager's arrival, one incident was not notified and therefore the regulator could not monitor the plans that were put in place to safeguard the child.

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

A new manager has been appointed since the last full inspection. She is committed to making positive changes. Senior leaders recognise that these changes are necessary, but they have been unable to progress before the new manager's arrival.

The manager has a sound understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. She has focused development plans on addressing shortfalls which existed before her appointment.

Staff speak very positively about the impact that the new manager has had on the home. Changes in practice have resulted in clearer expectations of staff. They feel more valued and respected, which inspires them to provide good-quality care to children.

Managers recognise the importance of ensuring that all staff have the skills and experience they need to support children effectively. They have decided to limit the number of children living at the home until plans to improve practice are embedded.

Recent recruitment has resulted in a full staffing complement. The new management team is sharply focused on raising standards. As a result, there is a firm basis for making improvements to the quality of care.

## 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        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))</p>                                             | 1 February 2024 |
| <p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.<br/>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(c))</p> | 1 February 2024 |

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| <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that recommendations from looked after child health assessments are acted on.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                        |
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs. (Regulation 5 (a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>1 February 2024</p> |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p> | <p>1 February 2024</p> |
| <p>The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>1 February 2024</p> |

keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(c))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have a say in the way that they are looked after.

## 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:** SC482296

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Hillcrest Children's Services Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Samantha Choules

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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