

1258095

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for up to six children who may have behavioural and/or emotional health issues. The home is part of a large private organisation.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 December 2017

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff develop positive relationships with young people. These relationships are nurturing, sensitive and caring. This helps young people to feel well cared for.
- Staff provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need to keep themselves safe.
- Staff take every opportunity to listen to young people and advocate for them.
- Staff respond to young people's complaints swiftly. Consequently, young people understand that their views are valued.
- Staff use incentives and rewards to help young people to make and sustain improvements in their behaviour.
- Young people receive the necessary support to maintain contact with their families.
- A passionate, child-focused registered manager provides staff with good support.

The children's home's areas for development:

- In some instances, documents, including young people's placements plans, have not been updated to ensure that they provide staff with clear guidance on how best to support young people.
- The registered manager is not sufficiently assertive in his challenge of partner agencies. This has contributed to some delay in services being provided for young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not applicable		
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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
<p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that—</p> <p>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))</p>	30/01/2018
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c)).</p> <p>In particular, young people’s placement plans should be kept under regular review and contain up-to-date information for staff to help them to provide young people with consistent care.</p>	30/01/2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people live in an impressive home environment. One young person described it as ‘a homely home’. Young people are actively involved in the development of the home. For example, based upon on the feedback from young people, horses have been purchased for the on-site stables and a gym is in the process of being set up. Young people recognise that their views matter, which helps them to feel valued and provides them with a sense of belonging.

Staff give young people lots of opportunities to have their say and contribute to the care

they receive. For example, all young people have an advocate, receive regular key-work sessions and participate in house meetings. Staff make a determined effort to ensure that young people receive prompt feedback on any requests or complaints they make. Young people's interests are at the heart of everything that the staff do.

Staff recognise that young people's engagement with education is fundamental to their progress. A deputy headteacher said in respect of one young person, 'Her engagement [in school] has massively increased.' When young people do not have a suitable education placement, the registered manager makes all reasonable efforts to address this, collaborating with the virtual head and social workers to identify a solution.

Young people have access to the primary health services that they need, such as dentists and doctors. Furthermore, regular communication with the provider's clinical team ensures that staff have a good understanding of young people's emotional health needs, and understand how best to meet them. Consequently, staff promote young people's health needs well.

Staff successfully support young people to see their families. A social worker said, 'They have bent over backwards to support contact.' This means that young people do not feel isolated, and are able to maintain their relationships with important family members.

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

Staff keep young people safe. Young people do not go missing and there are no current concerns around exploitation, self-harm or substance use. This is impressive, considering that previously these have been issues of concern for some of the young people. Young people benefit from stable and consistent care. A social worker said, 'I feel that she feels safe and contained.'

Staff are not risk averse and, when the time is right, they allow young people to demonstrate the progress they have made. For example, free time is increased and access to phones is reintroduced. Staff act as a reliable safety net while young people have the opportunity to show that they can make safe choices. A social worker said, 'They have done remarkably well in terms of her safety, and in terms of progressing her free time.'

Staff are consistent in their implementation of rules and boundaries. As a result, young people know what is expected of them. Staff use rewards and praise to incentivise young people to behave well. This works and young people's behaviour is generally settled.

Staff swiftly took action regarding the bullying behaviours being experienced by one young person. The input of the local police officer and the creative introduction of a young person's bullying champion meant that this issue was addressed quickly. Young people know that when they are unhappy and ask for help, staff will do everything possible to support them. Consequently, young people feel safe and protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager holds a suitable qualification. The registered manager is child focused, driven and keen. His staff team mirrors this. A culture of positivity radiates from the staff team. As a result, staff embrace new ideas and ways of working. Consequently, there is a palpable sense of momentum in respect of the development of the staff team and the care that young people receive. The manager and staff work hard to ensure that the home is a positive place for young people to live in. This contributes to young people's personal growth and development.

The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas that require improvement. It is evident that in the last four months the registered manager has focused on galvanising the staff team and embedding good practice. The staff understand the young people's needs well. However, this is not always supported by clear records. For example, young people's placement plans contain generic information, and do not always reflect each young person's individual needs. This is an area identified for improvement so as to ensure that written plans reflect the personalised care that young people receive. Furthermore, staff do not sign some case records and this too is an area that has been identified for improvement.

The registered manager uses team meetings, supervisions and training to ensure that staff have the skills to meet the needs of young people. The registered manager takes a more creative approach to supporting the staff. For example, he uses questionnaires and quizzes, on topics such as safeguarding, to test the staff's knowledge about young people. The staff are well supported, and provide young people with consistently good care.

Staff have developed successful links with partner agencies, including the police, schools and the local authority. Good communication is at the centre of this. However, the registered manager does not always challenge professionals when necessary, which has led to some delay in organising support for a young person.

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: 1258095

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Registered provider address: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited, Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Health, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Jarrod Elcock

Registered manager: Mark Easie

Inspector

Paul Robinson: social care inspector

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