

1275966

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 home is registered for up to six young people. It is part of a large private organisation that includes a company school and a clinical team. The statement of purpose says, 'Each individual young person follows their own programme in an atmosphere of high expectations, and achievable aims and where they are valued for themselves.'

The registered manager is suitably qualified and highly experienced. She has a number of senior staff in her team.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2019

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: this is the first inspection

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24 May 2018	Registration	Not judged

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>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p>	15/04/2019
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(ix))</p>	15/04/2019
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i))</p>	15/04/2019

Recommendations

- Registered persons must ensure there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival. A warm welcome and introduction to the home is an entitlement for all children whether they are admitted in a planned way or in an emergency. Where possible other children and young people should be supported to contribute to the design of the welcome and introduction and where appropriate the welcome itself. The home has a key role in helping children to understand why they are living there and the plans for their future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.7)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

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

Four young people have lived in the home since it opened in July 2018. They enjoy some good experiences from caring and attentive staff. However, young people can disrupt one another and can sometimes struggle to live together positively.

The manager and the staff are not always creative in making sure that a new young person gets to know what it will be like to live at the home before they arrive. This means that a new young person can arrive unprepared. Furthermore, staff do not always involve the existing group of young people in helping a new young person to feel welcome on their first day.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's complex needs, but staff are not yet successful in helping young people overcome their long-standing difficulties. Staff are good at keeping young people busy doing activities that they enjoy, such as visiting football clubs, going to the beach and walking dogs. However, staff do not consistently empathise with and reassure young people that they are valued unconditionally. Young people say that they like staff and want to stay, but if they show unsettled behaviour they ask whether they will be the next young person who will be asked to leave.

Staff plan healthy daily routines for young people. They work closely with the organisation's teaching staff from the school and clinical advisers. They provide good food and plenty of active time outside. Staff provide individual evening routines designed to help young people wind down and sleep. This also helps young people to cope with a school day.

However, staff have not created a strong family atmosphere. For example, it is difficult for young people to know who is here and who is doing what. Young people have not had the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms. Things that they request, or that staff identify that they need, are not always promptly acted on. Staff have not involved young people in collecting, displaying and talking about memories of their time here. Their discussions with staff are not recorded in ways that are helpful to them. These shortfalls hold back young people's progress.

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

Staff and managers identify young people's risks well and plan how they will support and care for them. Staff coordinate with police, teaching staff and clinicians with the aim of providing young people with consistency. However, staff's approaches have not reduced the high number of unsafe incidents. At times, young people show frequent risk-taking and copycat behaviour that hurts themselves and others. Staff regularly use physical

intervention to prevent serious harm and damage.

There are enough suitable staff to supervise young people well. Staff follow young people if they go missing from the home and have a good understanding of the planned response for each young person. Staff talk to young people after any incident of unsafe behaviour. They try to help young people to make up for hurt and damage that they have caused.

Sometimes young people's behaviour gets worse because staff challenge them and give consequences without using the therapeutic approaches that underpin the home's ethos. For example, staff emphasise to young people the legal and other consequences of any discriminatory and violent behaviour. Staff withdraw their attention from young people and do not talk with them enough about the possible underlying reasons for their behaviour. They use punitive as well as restorative sanctions for unsafe behaviour. As a consequence of the inconsistency in approach, young people can sometimes display insecurities and the relationships between each other and staff are undermined.

Managers and senior staff listen to young people's complaints and take good action. Any allegations of harm are properly dealt with. This means that young people are kept safe from unsuitable people.

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

The manager and deputy manager are highly experienced. They have appointed some senior and qualified staff whom they know well. However, managers have not thoroughly assessed the needs of young people before deciding to offer them a place. They have admitted young people without ensuring that the young person knows what it will be like living at the home. They have not assessed effectively whether new young people will fit with the existing group of young people. This means that young people have not made good progress and one young person's placement had to be ended.

The manager has not ensured that the home works in line with its statement of purpose. She has not ensured that staff deliver the therapeutic care described in the statement. She has admitted older young people when the statement of purpose says: 'Provides specialised care to the younger children within the organisation.'

The management team does not closely review all young people's behaviour incidents and the practice of staff around incidents. Some manager reviews do not identify whether staff's practice was helpful or needs to change. Manager's findings are not always clear and regularly communicated to all staff. Some sanctions are not recorded and are therefore not reviewed. These shortfalls mean that principles of understanding, dignity, kindness, involvement and preserving positive relationships with young people are not always followed. Young people's behaviour is therefore slow to improve.

The manager has now recruited a full staff team and no longer needs to use agency staff. She said in her six-monthly review report, 'Staff need to take ownership of the home as at times it feels sparse and very clinical.' The manager is already aware of most

of the improvements that are needed to produce good outcomes for young people.

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: 1275966

Provision sub-type: children's home

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

Registered provider address: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester,
Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Jarrod Elcock

Registered manager: Gillian Thomason

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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