

# 1275966

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered for up to six children. It is part of a large private organisation that includes a 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.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 7 August 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children's welfare is not promoted, the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 5 March 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>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 and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met, children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and</p>	30/09/2019

<p>ensure that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(c))</p>	
<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—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(ix))</p>	<p>30/09/2019</p>
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at</p>	<p>30/09/2019</p>

<p>risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))</p>	
<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—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(e)(f))</p>	30/09/2019
<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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p>	30/09/2019

<p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and reviews the placement of each child in the home;</p> <p>and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to fire drills.</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made.</p> <p>Within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(b)(i))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to the date and circumstances of all incidents when a child goes missing from the home, including any information relating to the child's whereabouts during the period of absence.</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	30/09/2019

## Recommendations

- 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)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Relationships between staff and children are not consistently positive. Some staff provide poor-quality care to children. This is because of a frequently changing staff team and staff's lack of understanding of children's needs. As a result, children have not progressed well, and they have experienced poor outcomes.

Children's care plans are variable in quality. Some are extremely poor and do not include sufficient detail to help staff to care for children appropriately. Arrangements when children move into and out of the home are poor. Managers do not always examine the risks relating to children already living in the home, nor do they consider the impact that children living together may have. For example, two children who were both known to be at risk of sexual exploitation were placed together with little consideration of the risks that this might pose.

Staff do not consider how children can be best supported when they arrive, and information shared with children at this time lacks detail. Consequently, children are not made to feel at home, nor are they fully aware of staff's expectations.

The home's complaints process is inadequate. Most complaints are not well recorded. Records fail to show whether concerns are sufficiently investigated, and complainants do not always receive a formal response. As a result, children do not always feel that their concerns are taken seriously.

Staff do not meet all children's health needs. Children's records do not show whether important issues have been addressed and staff are not aware of how to respond to some health issues. Staff do not ensure that children receive enough support to improve their mental health. The response to incidents of self-harm can be poor. For example, one child cut their neck using a metal object. The summary of this incident only states, 'Clean wipe was provided, and cuts were looked at, no further action was needed.' These shortfalls place children at risk.

Staff do not support all children to achieve in their education. Although some children make good progress, others do not. Staff do not always understand what support children require, and records lack detail. Consequently, children have left the home with little information about their academic abilities, the support that they require, or what progress they have made while living at the home.

Some children enjoy a range of activities. They talk about activities such as day trips, fishing and bike riding that they have recently enjoyed. One child plays in a football team. These activities help to improve children's confidence.

Children enjoy spending time with their families when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Staff support these arrangements as well as advocating for children who may not wish to see their relatives. Consequently, children develop relationships with the people that are most important to them.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

Staff do not keep children safe. Risk assessments are basic. They do not give sufficient guidance to staff about how to respond when serious incidents occur, including times when children go missing or are at risk of sexual exploitation. Consequently, the response of staff is poor. Children are vulnerable due to staff's lack of knowledge and action.

Managers and staff do not always respond to safeguarding concerns in line with local procedures. For example, allegations against staff are not always responded to appropriately. Paperwork has been sent to the wrong people, and in one case the staff member that an allegation was being made about completed the referral document. These shortfalls mean that staff and children are not adequately protected and concerning practice is not adequately investigated.

There is no clear strategy to respond to recent inappropriate sexualised behaviours. Children are separated rather than staff seeking to understand the reasons for this behaviour, reduce risk and help children to understand how to keep themselves safe. It is unclear whether social workers are fully aware of these concerns. Consequently, children are not safeguarded.

When children go missing, it is not clear whether staff take effective action to follow up safeguarding concerns. For example, while being missing from the home overnight a child had potentially used drugs and met an unknown male. It is unclear whether any action was taken in response. In addition, children are not always seen by an independent person after they have been missing. These shortfalls place children at significant risk.

Staff do not respond consistently to poor behaviours. Children have been 'escorted' by staff, yet it is unclear why this is done or what this entails. Managers do not challenge this practice. As a result, children may be inappropriately restrained.

At least one incident of restraint has not been recorded. Although children are spoken to about being held, these discussions fail to look at the reasons for their behaviour or encourage them to think about other ways to behave. Managers have failed to explore why there has been a significant increase in the number of restraints being used, or what this means for children.

Staff do not adequately follow some safety procedures. For example, fire drills are incorrectly recorded, with some entries showing that drills have taken place in the future. It is unclear if children and staff are aware of how to respond in the event of fire.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The independent visitor has raised a range of concerns since the last inspection. Managers have failed to respond to these in a timely way. For example, the visitor raised concerns about the safety of glass in some windows. The delay in fitting safety film meant that a child was able to break the glass and use it to harm themselves.

Although it is a clean and well-looked-after building, the home lacks personalisation. Consequently, it is not a homely environment where children feel that they belong.

Managers and staff have failed to ensure that the home provides the services outlined in the statement of purpose. For example, children are not supported by psychology services, staff are not responsive to complaints, and children do not have 'an enjoyable, affectionate and supportive place to live'.

Staff are not well supported by managers. Supervisions are not regularly carried out, even for new staff who have had little or no residential experience. Staff have not received appraisals and subsequently do not have development plans. Staff are therefore not being helped to improve their practice and to deliver good-quality care to children.

The home has some experienced and qualified staff. However, the staff team has changed considerably over the past six months. Almost two thirds of the team are new to the home. This does not allow children to receive consistent care from adults that they know well.

Managers and staff have not taken enough action to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection and the subsequent monitoring visit. The management structure has recently changed. The registered manager is not currently at the home. The responsible individual and acting manager have undertaken a review of the service. There have been some improvements in areas including care planning processes. However, these improvements are in their infancy and are yet to be embedded. Consequently, children are still not receiving good quality care.

## **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) Ltd

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

**Responsible individual:** Samantha Millward

**Registered manager:** Gillian Thomason

## Inspector

Andrew Hewston, social care inspector

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