

SC415347

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company that operates a number of children's homes across the country owns this home. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The registered manager left his post on 31 May 2019. A new manager was appointed and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

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: 13 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2017	Full	Good
11/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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))	20/12/2019
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(2)(b)(vii))	20/12/2019
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. 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; 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 and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	20/12/2019
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	20/12/2019
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	20/12/2019

children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(d))	
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; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a))	20/12/2019

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the four children who previously lived in the home have moved out. Three of these children had positive, well planned moves. However, managers served notice on one child, following the admission of a new child which resulted in his placement becoming unstable. This child had previously been settled and was making significant progress. Consequently, this move has meant that he has experienced a disrupted placement unnecessarily.

Relationships between children and staff are respectful and affectionate. Children have opportunities to talk about the things that matter in their lives and staff focus on significant issues in key-work sessions. These sessions help children to develop the skills that they need to keep themselves safe online. They also help children to think about others and to talk about their own needs and the challenges that they face.

While there have been some improvements to the physical environment of the home, the manager has not ensured that it is consistently maintained to a high standard, meets the needs of the children and feels and looks like a family home. One child has some broken furniture in his bedroom and the walls in children's bedrooms need painting. Consequently, children are not always provided with a nurturing environment.

Children receive good support to be healthy. Staff implement well written plans which cover important topics like healthy eating and exercise.

Children's educational experiences vary. One child has made significant progress and is now attending school without needing staff to support him. A headteacher told the inspector that the manager is 'approachable' and feels that the home and school take a 'joined up approach' to meet the child's needs. This has been particularly evident, as he has achieved 100% attendance. However, another child is being educated at home through the provision of a tutor. This is not meeting his needs. Managers have not challenged the child's placing authority sufficiently. As a result, this child is not receiving the level of support that he needs.

Staff support children to keep in touch with their families. As a result, children continue to enjoy relationships with the people who are important to them. One child's social worker was pleased with the quality of the support that the child receives and the way in which staff welcome family members to the home and assist with transport arrangements.

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

The manager does not always complete a full assessment of the needs of all of the children already living in the home when considering new referrals. Consequently, the compatibility of the potential group is not always well considered. Impact risk assessments do not show how managers and staff decide that children can live safely alongside each other. Consequently, three children have needed to move on from the home soon after their arrival. This has a detrimental impact on those children and the other children in the home.

Staff generally manage children's challenging behaviour well, in line with their individual risk assessments. The use of physical intervention has reduced, and restraints are only carried out by trained members of staff, as a last resort. Sanctions are fair and proportionate and help children to understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others. Staff offer rewards to children to celebrate their achievements.

Managers ensure that allegations are referred to the appropriate agencies and are investigated accordingly. The manager responds well to complaints. This helps to safeguard children and reassures them that their concerns are taken seriously.

There are not enough permanent, experienced and qualified staff. Over 75% of the staff team members have left in the last year. Only 40% of staff hold the relevant qualification in working with children. Managers are providing additional support to ensure that there is always an experienced member of staff on shift. They are working hard to recruit and improve the stability and quality of the workforce. New staff have recently been recruited.

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

The manager has not challenged placing authorities when the service that they have provided for children has fallen short of what should be expected. For example, following the admission of one child it became evident that the information provided by the social work team did not reflect the child's needs and complex behaviour. This resulted in the child having to leave the placement soon after arrival. This was not a positive outcome for this child and could have placed other children at risk of bullying and intimidation. The manager acknowledges that admissions planning is an area of weakness and she has plans in place designed to improve this. This manager has already secured agreement from senior leaders that there will be no further admissions to the home until these improvements have been made.

There have been significant changes to the staff team and, as a result, new staff have started to work at the home. Generally, they are well vetted. However, it is not always evident why applicants have left their previous employment, although there is no evidence that this has had a negative impact. These gaps could potentially lead to unsuitable adults working at the home and place children at risk.

The manager actively promotes equality and celebrates diversity. One child is beginning to learn about and understand his heritage. The manager and staff challenge any discrimination and have created a sense of tolerance in the home.

Managerial monitoring is improving but, in some areas, systems are limited. Consequently, the manager does not always evaluate incidents or identify learning. This means that children do not consistently benefit from lessons learned. Additionally, there are some gaps in basic information about children. This prevents staff from having access to fully accurate information about children in their care.

Staff feel well supported by the manager and feel that the home is improving after a turbulent period. Staff receive regular supervision which is reflective and tests their knowledge. This means that staff get the help that they need to improve their practice and deliver safe care to children.

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: SC415347

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: Lisa Aspinall

Inspectors

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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