

1258095

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 six children who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home has had three managers since registration in December 2017. The current manager has been in post since 2 September 2019. He has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management and intends to apply to be the registered manager.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 January 2020

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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued following the last full inspection. At a monitoring visit on 6 November 2019, Ofsted judged that the notice had been met.

Some progress had been made in meeting the nine requirements set at the full inspection. As a result, six requirements were judged to be met. An additional requirement was made at the monitoring visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
22/11/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2018	Full	Good
06/12/2017	Full	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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes children's welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(d)(e))	28/02/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4))	28/02/2020
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	28/02/2020

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out. Managers served notice due to concerns about the safety of the other children living in the home. Two children currently reside in the home. Both say that they feel that the home is calmer and happier.

Despite facing significant challenges, children's self-belief and confidence improve. Consequently, they make good progress socially and emotionally. Support from the in-house clinical team and a clear understanding of attachment theory underpin staff practice.

The home is well presented and maintained. Children have been involved in choosing the decor for their bedrooms and other areas of the home. As a result, children reside in a homely environment.

Children's relationships with people who are important to them are promoted and maintained by managers and staff. For example, the manager arranged for one child to have dinner with his family on Christmas day. Social workers have confidence in the manager and staff to make appropriate arrangements for children to see their families.

Staff are proactive in encouraging children to attend school. When necessary, the manager and staff advocate for children to ensure that they have every opportunity to reach their potential. This approach helps to support children's learning.

Staff are creative about how they gain children's views about things that are important to them. This includes using individual key-work sessions and other informal opportunities. Each child receives feedback from the manager about any requests that they make. As a result, children feel that their views are valued. One child told the inspector, 'The manager is great. He listens, and things change as a result of what we say.'

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

Staff understand the risks that children face. Effective, proactive planning identifies potential risks and ensures that staff manage these effectively, both inside and outside of the home. Staff set clear and consistent boundaries. Staff help children to identify triggers that make them feel angry or upset and develop techniques that they can use when they feel like this. Risk assessments also provide clear guidance for staff about how they should support children.

Managers have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection thresholds and referral processes. Safeguarding policies are clear and succinct. This ensures that staff understand their responsibilities for protecting children. The manager works in partnership with the designated officer for the local authority. This means that any allegations of abuse or harm are quickly investigated. This good practice promotes children's safety.

There have been no incidents of physical restraint since the last inspection. Instead, staff use their verbal de-escalation skills. This approach further enhances children's feelings of safety and security.

There are very few incidents in the home and children do not go missing. Consequently, children benefit from living in a home that provides them with stability.

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

Following the inadequate judgement in September 2019, the organisation has provided additional management resources to stabilise the home. Currently, the operations manager spends a significant amount of time at the home each week. This arrangement has allowed the new manager to spend time with the children and to model good practice to the staff team to improve the quality of care provided to children.

The manager keeps children at the heart of all that he does. He is ambitious for children and ensures that this personal and professional ethos is cascaded throughout the staff team. However, there have been changes to the staff team and several staff have left. The manager understands the impact that a changing staff team has on children and is planning to appoint new staff who have the necessary skills to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma.

The manager has already secured agreement from senior leaders that there will be no further admissions to the home until new staff have been appointed and trained.

Staff told the inspector that they feel supported. However, staff do not receive effective supervision and the recording of supervision is poor. Consequently, staff are not being provided with opportunities to receive feedback on their practice. In addition, the manager has not yet developed monitoring systems to ensure that all staff are receiving supervision regularly.

Staff either hold the required level 3 diploma or are currently working to achieve this. Plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. Staff complete child-specific training that informs their practice and meets children's individual and diverse needs.

The organisation has appointed an independent person to undertake visits to the home at least once per month. However, the reports produced by the independent person do not consistently meet regulation as they fail to comment as to whether children in the home are effectively safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes the children's welfare.

Management oversight of behaviour management has improved. This has enabled consistency in how staff use consequences and rewards to manage children's behaviour.

Children benefit from having a manager who strives to improve their lives. He is currently receiving a high level of support from the operations manager. Together they have identified areas of development for the home and have plans in place to address these.

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) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Samantha Millward

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2020