

1258095

Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Monitoring visit

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 has not yet submitted an application to be the registered manager.

Inspection date: 14 May 2020

This monitoring visit

A monitoring inspection was conducted remotely on 14 May 2020 in response to information received by Ofsted which raises concerns about the safety of children. Specifically, safeguarding notifications were received by Ofsted in relation to significant safeguarding incidents and an incident of whistle blowing.

The inspector found serious failings in respect of the safeguarding of children and the leadership and management of the home. Following this inspection, Ofsted issued compliance notices in respect of regulation 12 and regulation 13. A notice that restricted the number of children that the home can accommodate was also issued on 18 May 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ofsted did not carry out a physical visit to the home. The inspector gathered evidence in several different ways, including talking to the deputy manager and the responsible individual and asking them to provide electronic documents for the inspector to review.

Staff are unable to de-escalate situations. They do not follow advice in children's behaviour management plans. Incidents have consequently lasted for several hours.

Children's relationships with one another are negatively affected, and children have at times become involved in trying to de-escalate incidents. The manager has identified that staff do not intervene quickly and they, at times, inappropriately call the police to support them to manage a child's behaviour.

Staff do not follow strategies to reduce risk. On one occasion, staff left a young person, who was very distressed, unsupervised inside the home while they watched the young person through a window from the outside. This is despite the young person's behaviour management plan stating that staff should not leave her alone when she is upset. The young person was using a wooden stick to bang against doors and walls and she gained access to the office by making a hole in the door. The young person caused damage and threatened staff with a fire extinguisher while discharging it out of the office door. Staff then called the police to manage the child's behaviours. The child was therefore at risk of criminalisation because of staff's inability to de-escalate the situation. Staff did not consider the impact of these behaviours on other young people in the home.

There are shortfalls in risk assessment and management of risk. Despite high levels of staffing, children have consistently been able to gain access to the office and to car keys which they have used on one occasion to try to access the company car. Despite this being identified as a significant risk, risk assessments have not been updated with advice to staff. This means that children continue to place themselves at risk of harm.

Managers and staff have insufficient knowledge of safeguarding procedures. Staff do not take timely action to report concerns, and managers do not immediately act on those concerns. This resulted in a staff member continuing to work with children for two days after an incident because another staff member delayed whistle blowing their concerns. In addition, one child made an allegation about a member of staff hurting her finger during an incident of restraint. Managers incorrectly treated this incident as a complaint rather than a safeguarding issue and did not notify the local authority safeguarding officer. These failures in safeguarding practice show that managers and staff do not understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe.

Staff training to keep children safe and to manage their risks is not up to date. Two staff members have not had training in managing ligatures despite self-harm being a known risk for children. Two staff have not had training in food hygiene and medication. There is a lack of urgency in following up identified training needs, such as behaviour management training. This is particularly relevant given the issues of behaviour management in the home.

The manager does not have effective systems in place to share information with staff. The staff team has not had a team meeting since January 2020. There are no alternative systems in place to share and discuss information about children. The manager does not keep the statement of purpose up to date with details of staff working in the home and does not keep a clear record of staff who have worked in the home. This demonstrates

significant deficits in the manager's monitoring activity and his capacity to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided to children.

The manager does not ensure that the home is managed in line with the statement of purpose. Only one staff member has had attachment training, despite this being described as part of core training.

Managers have failed to notify Ofsted when police have been called to manage young people's behaviour. This prevents the regulator from having oversight of safeguarding incidents in the home.

Staff recording practice is poor. When staff use physical restraint to manage children's complex behaviours, the length of time that holds are used is not always recorded in detail. Staff do not always record dates of incidents consistently across documents. This prevents meaningful independent oversight of staff practice and means that children and staff are not effectively safeguarded.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/01/2020	Full	Good
17/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
22/11/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2018	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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(xi))</p>	26/06/2020
<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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p>	31/05/2020 *

<p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(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—</p> <p>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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p>	31/05/2020 *
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.</p> <p>(Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p>	26/06/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.</p>	26/06/2020

(Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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 which includes—</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(3)(a)(iii)(iv))</p>	26/06/2020
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date; and</p> <p>retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry.</p> <p>(Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	26/06/2020
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40(4)(b)(c)(e))</p>	26/06/2020

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 (coronavirus) is currently posing to those we regulate. During this visit, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 by the home. This has included the effect these have had on staffing arrangements. The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

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: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Clive Coombs

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Karen Gillingwater, social care inspector
Sarah Billett, social care compliance inspector

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