

# 2534684

## **Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

### **Information about this children's home**

This children's home is registered to accommodate and provide care for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager's post has been vacant since July 2020.

**Inspection date:** 7 July 2020

**Date of previous inspection:** A monitoring inspection took place on 26 November 2019.

### **This monitoring visit**

The home was registered on 2 October 2019. Due to the current suspension of full inspection activity by Ofsted, a monitoring inspection took place on 24 June 2020. This was conducted off site, due to current COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions.

No judgement was made from this monitoring inspection.

Leaders have reflected on the challenges they faced in the early development of the home. The responsible individual recognises that it may have benefited the team to have had more experienced staff from the start, who were familiar with the ethos of the organisation, to guide and support the new team. The organisation has now rectified this, bringing in experienced senior staff to help develop staff practice. The team manager reflected on how this has also boosted staff morale. These changes have had a direct influence on children's behaviour in the home. There has been a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of incidents.

Children are making good progress. One child who was struggling at the commencement of his placement has flourished. Staff engaged in effective multi-agency working to stabilise his placement. The child has experienced a major

turnaround, returning to full-time education and learning to manage his emotions. He is relaxed and happy in his home.

The organisation has also closely reviewed placement and matching risk assessments. This has resulted in the successful introduction of a new child to the home.

Children and staff have been busy planning how they want to improve the home environment. The garden has been filled with play equipment including a trampoline, pool and basketball hoops. Children were involved in the choice and purchase of equipment that they wanted. The current focus is on personalising the interior of the home to make it homelier and to reflect the individual personalities of the children.

The organisation's clinical team has worked alongside staff. This has enabled them to reflect on their practice and clinical staff to support and embed the therapeutic ethos of the home. The interim manager is a strong advocate of the playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy approach and role models this effectively to his team and the children.

The staff team is culturally diverse. This has helped children to learn about difference and improve their understanding of people from different backgrounds. Staff experienced some targeting by children, which was associated with their race or ethnicity. Staff have worked hard to get children to accept difference, and this has resulted in a downturn in this type of behaviour. At present, a lot of this work is anecdotal, and the home would benefit from written strategies, policies and procedures for staff for dealing with racist behaviour.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, leaders have struggled to maintain all mandatory training for staff, particularly those courses that have a face-to-face element. The manager has not yet developed a clear plan to resolve gaps in staff training when face-to-face training is able to resume.

Staff have experienced a change in ownership of the organisation, but this change has been managed effectively. Home staff are now benefiting from the expertise of a development manager from the new owners, who are helping to shape operational policy and practice.

Staff reflected positively on the additional support they had received from the responsible individual and the organisation's executive team. They feel that they have taken shared ownership of the challenges faced by the home and supported the home to move forward to a much happier and more functional place.

The responsible individual commented on the pride he feels in the staff and children's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. He spoke of the huge resilience and positive approach to challenges faced. Throughout this period, children have remained safe and continued to make good progress in their education.

Staff commented on how important it is to get the feel of the home right. They said that the home has a positive energy and that the current atmosphere is 'great'.

Professionals and parents gave positive feedback about the home. They described a nurturing environment for children and praised the open and transparent communication of staff. They were also able to identify excellent progress for children. A parent said that they 'would not change a thing'.

## **Recent inspection history**

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/11/2019	Interim	No judgement

## 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.</p> <p>The conditions are that the care is delivered by a person who has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(3)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, review skills and competencies for all staff and devise a plan to ensure that mandatory training is up to date for all staff.</p>	30/09/2020

### Recommendations

- 9.16 Children should be supported by staff to understand what abuse is. They should be given information about how to report abuse or any concerns about possible abuse. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.16)

In particular, devise clear policy and procedure for dealing with racist behaviour to support staff to deal with incidents effectively.

## 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.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2534684

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd, Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

**Responsible individual:** Clifford James

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

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