

SC415347

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company that operates a number of children's homes across the country. 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 manager registered with Ofsted in May 2020 and she is currently completing her management qualification.

**Visit dates:** 2 to 3 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 23 October 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Findings from the visit**

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

### **The care of children**

From June to October 2020, there were no young people living in the home. During this time, the home was completely refurbished. This means young people are provided with a beautiful home. The registered manager has worked hard to create a warm and welcoming environment where young people can feel safe.

At the time of this visit, one young person was living in the home. The young person told the inspector that she was happy and that she felt safe living in this home. Her social worker confirmed this and said, 'She is very settled. Staff have made her feel comfortable and she has asked if she can remain living in this home. Staff have taken the time to get to know her and understand her needs. I am very happy with the home and couldn't ask for more.'

Young people's achievements are celebrated. This helps to improve their self-esteem and confidence. Staff take photographs to capture happy times and create memory books for young people to keep.

Staff place great importance on ensuring that the young person is involved in planning their care. Staff have been creative in finding ways to enable her to communicate her wishes and feelings about significant issues.

The young person has been supported to attend health appointments and consequently her health needs have been met. When necessary, bespoke support has been sought.

Staff are good advocates for young people. One member of staff raised a formal complaint about a health service when the service they provided to the young person fell short of what was expected. This positive practice has resulted in the young person feeling like staff care about her and her welfare.

The young person has been supported to attend school. Feedback from education professionals about the support that managers and staff provide is overwhelmingly positive. When the young person expressed an interest in attending college, staff supported her to attend for an interview.

### **The safety of children**

Staff are dynamic and flexible in their approach to behaviour management. Staff know the young person well and understand what approach works best for her. Staff are quick to recognise the signs that the young person is struggling. Consequently, staff defuse situations quickly and there have been no incidents that have required physical intervention.

The young person has not been missing from care, despite an extensive history of concerns around missing-from-care incidents. The young person feels safe in the home and is given space when they need it. The young person has sought help from staff rather than run away. Nonetheless, staff remain vigilant to the potential for such behaviour.

Staff practice is consistently underpinned by the home's therapeutic approach. This is the cornerstone of the progress young people make. Staff acknowledge that young people will experience uncertainty, resulting in difficult thoughts and emotions. In response, they work together with them to find solutions and help them to develop new strategies to manage their anxieties. The clinical team attends team meetings and provides support and guidance to managers and staff.

Staff ensure that clear written risk assessments are regularly updated to reflect new and emerging risks. These assessments ensure that staff have access to the most current information about how to safeguard young people. The young person currently living in this home has worked with staff to identify strategies which will work for her.

### **Leaders and managers**

The registered manager uses a range of excellent monitoring systems. These ensure that she has a detailed understanding of the care that young people receive. As a result, the registered manager successfully identifies patterns and trends. She uses this information to inform the development of the service and to continually improve it. Senior managers within the organisation also undertake additional monitoring of the home with the aim of driving improvements and outcomes for young people.

The standards set by the registered manager provide a high benchmark which her staff strive to achieve. Staff believe in the registered manager. They want their home to be the best, and they all have high aspirations for young people.

The registered manager is positive about organisational changes and the increased support to her and the staff. Staff retention is improving, which means that young people receive care from a consistent and stable staff team.

Staff are very positive about the support that the registered manager gives them. Supervision sessions are regular and of a high quality. They help staff to generate ideas and reflect on their practice. New staff are robustly vetted and are supported through a clear, effective induction process. This ensures that young people receive high-quality care. The staff team is diverse and has an excellent mix of experience and skills. Staff are positive role models for children.

The registered manager uses research to inform and improve staff practice. She holds regular workshops to share up-to-date research on issues such as promoting emotional resilience in children. The registered manager's motivation and

enthusiasm are infectious. She receives praise from young people, staff and other professionals. She talks with pride about her staff and young people's achievements.

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC415347

**Registered provider:** Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Laura Duckers

**Registered manager:** Lisa Aspinall

## **Inspector**

Annemarie Parker, Social Care Inspector

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