

# 2534684

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2022.

### Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 20 May 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2021	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children benefit from warm and highly supportive relationships with staff. Staff are passionate about the role that they play in children's lives. Their dedication has supported children to make good progress in many areas of their lives, including education, behaviour and emotional well-being.

Staff develop effective support plans for children that recognise their individual needs. Staff are in the process of adapting to new recording systems; they recognise that they are not yet using these systems to their full effect. This can mean that staff are not always capturing the progress of children effectively.

Social workers praise the quality of care and support that the children receive. Professionals particularly like the team's attention to detail, clear communication and strong leadership.

Children live in a calm, spacious home, cared for by staff who help them to make good progress in managing their emotions and improving their behaviour. Children relate well to each other and enjoy lots of activities together, as well as getting time to themselves to explore wider opportunities in the community, for example, karate and coding clubs.

Children say that they feel listened to and that their views are valued. Staff regularly make time to listen to children. Staff are proud that the scope of these discussions has grown to include consideration of global issues and diversity.

The home is very well maintained and children have access to lots of activities, both indoors and outside in the large garden. Children recently helped set up a large outdoor swimming pool and are enjoying this immensely.

Staff worked hard to ensure that a child who was experiencing some uncertainty around his transition from the home was kept safe and well supported while a suitable moving-on plan was developed. The child is now in a semi-independent placement, making progress and enjoying the continuing support of the team. The registered manager has identified independence skills as a key area of focus for children as they enter their teens.

Children are making good progress in education. One child who had fallen behind, due to disruption in academic placements, has managed to catch up a full academic year and continues to achieve well. Another child, who had not accessed education for three years, is now settled and enjoying the time at school.

Staff work closely with external professionals to support children's health and well-being. Staff have supported children to think about healthy eating and regular exercise, enabling children to learn about the value and importance of self-care.

Staff place importance on helping children to maintain contact with relatives whenever possible. Staff work hard to develop links with families and step in to provide practical and emotional support to the children when required.

Managers are considering whether current levels of supervision at night are appropriate for the needs and risks presented by the children.

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

Staff are skilled at recognising and understanding the specific vulnerabilities of children in their care. They have supported children to reduce risk-taking behaviours. In one case, a child was frequently absent and staying with family members without authorisation. Staff worked closely with the placing authority and family to find a pragmatic and age-appropriate response that prioritised the safety of the child while avoiding an overly restrictive intervention.

Staff work patiently and reflectively to understand why children may be struggling emotionally or behaving in a particular way. In doing so, they have achieved high levels of success in reducing negative behaviours. Incidents are rare and, when they do happen, they are managed effectively to reduce frequency and severity.

Staff teams communicate well to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted when managing children's behaviour. This gives children a predictable and reliable base and promotes stability. As a result, staff are able to identify significant reductions in challenging or risky behaviours for all children.

Effective and diligent recruitment practice ensures that children are cared for by safe and trusted adults. Staff also work closely with a range of external partners to ensure that children are safeguarded well and have access to a broad and supportive network around them at all times.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is proud of the progress that children and his staff team have made since the last inspection. He has a clear vision for areas of the service to be developed, and these are reflected in detailed action plans. He places a strong emphasis on reflective practice and ensures that staff understand and recognise the impact of trauma on children. Staff have recently started regular reflective supervisions to support them in their understanding.

The registered manager has a deep understanding of the support needs of children. He sets clear goals and has high aspirations for their lives. He is an effective role model to staff and this is reflected in the high levels of motivation and morale in the team.

Professionals reflect very positively on his leadership, with one social worker saying that the registered manager is 'the best I have worked with'.

Staff say that they feel well supported and they place high levels of trust in their manager. Supervision is delivered on schedule and staff benefit from the manager's availability and openness at all times. Staff also enjoy good-quality induction and training. A new member of staff highlighted the excellent support from the whole team to enable him to adapt quickly to life and work at the home. Training compliance rates are high, which is especially impressive following the restrictions that the pandemic placed on delivering face-to-face learning.

The registered manager has made good progress against requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection; these have led to improvements in supervision, training and qualifications of staff and in allegation management.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff are supported to enhance their understanding and skills in using the organisation's preferred recording systems. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that they reflect on levels of supervision of children at night and assess whether they are appropriate for the current needs of children and in line with the manager's ethos of developing children's independence. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)
- The registered person should ensure that they continue to develop effective means of capturing the progress made by children in all areas of their lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.4)

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 2534684

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

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

**Registered provider address:** Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

**Responsible individual:** Sadie Dangerfield

**Registered manager:** Robert Rivers

## Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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