

1275966

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

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to accommodate up to six children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has recently registered with Ofsted. She is working towards her level 5 qualification.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/06/2021	Full	Good
02/12/2019	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Inadequate
05/03/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living in this home, with one child rating the home nine and half out of 10. The manager and staff ensure that the home is well maintained and the environment is personalised to the children. For example, wall art in the games room incorporates the interests of each individual child. Children's bedrooms are decorated in line with their preferences and communal areas have a warm and homely feel to them. This supports children to feel valued and helps them to invest in their home.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Children enthusiastically engage in activities with each other and staff, and the inspector observed them laughing and interacting well. Children are settled and have positive experiences, and through good relationships are well supported to make progress in different aspects of their development.

Staff at the home recognise the importance of family relationships. Managers and staff have worked exceptionally hard to support children to maintain positive relationships with family members and people who are important to them. This has helped children to rebuild relationships. As a result of this excellent support, plans are in place for two children to return to the care of their family.

Staff prioritise the children's education and children make good progress with their learning. All children living in this home attend school. The manager actively engages with education professionals to advocate for children to ensure that they have access to the most appropriate education provision. One child who was not in mainstream education now attends a mainstream school full time. Another child is being well supported to make the transition from primary to secondary school.

The children are encouraged to have fun and enjoy themselves. Children have opportunities to participate in activities in the home such as playing video games, baking and watching films with staff. Children also go on trips, such as to the zoo, and have opportunities to go horse riding and provide animal care. Children's involvement in these activities helps to develop their self-esteem.

Staff support children with bereavement and loss. This is because they understand how important this is for children. The manager and staff provided exceptional support to one child who experienced the loss of a parent. They helped the child to process this, and the child now has family photos displayed in their bedroom. To support the child further, they have a memorial plant in the garden which they can see from their bedroom window. This is helping the child to understand and make sense of difficult experiences.

Children are involved in their care. They have regular opportunities to express their views. Staff creatively capture each child's journey at the home through memory

books and newsletters. Children's records show that staff encourage them to have a say in decisions about day-to-day life in the home, such as food menus and activities, as well as longer-term decisions about their future.

Not all children have an up-to-date care plan from their placing authority on file at the home. Two of the children's care plans have changed and the statutory documents are out of date. This means that staff at the home may not be following the same plans agreed at children's statutory reviews. However, this has not yet compromised children's experiences or progress.

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

Children benefit from clear and consistent routines, rules and boundaries. Staff carry out regular key-work sessions with children. They use creative ways to support children to talk about their emotions. This helps children to reflect on their behaviours and actions.

Staff use de-escalation techniques to help children to manage their behaviour without hurting themselves or other people. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort. When such incidents do occur, staff ensure that a child-friendly debrief is completed with children. They use this to reflect with children and support their understanding of what has happened. As well as supporting staff and children to reflect and learn, this means that staff maintain positive and caring relationships with children.

Children know how to make a complaint. When children do complain, this is taken seriously. The manager investigates complaints and addresses any identified actions thoroughly. One child told the inspector that he was happy with the outcome when he made a complaint about his care.

Staff carry out a wide range of key-work sessions to help children understand how to keep safe. For example, staff educate children about bullying. This means that children understand that such behaviours are not acceptable, as well as the impact of bullying behaviours on others. This promotes positive behaviour and helps children feel safe. However, staff have not fully explored work around online safety and so children do not receive consistently good support in this area. This has the potential to leave children vulnerable to risk when using the internet.

The home uses bedroom door alarms to safeguard children. Children are not consulted regularly about this, as outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Managers and staff do not always review the need for this type of surveillance in the home. Consequently, children may have alarms on their bedroom doors activated when this is not necessary.

There are a variety of risk assessments in place to keep children safe. However, the language used in one child's risk assessments could be misleading for staff. This was particularly relevant to staff guidance about online safety. Due to staff's good knowledge of the child, this has not compromised his safety. However, these

shortfalls may compromise the quality of care the child receives from staff who do not know the child as well.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is a strong leader and positive role model. Her dedication and drive have been instrumental in making the house a home. She is highly ambitious for the children and staff. She is passionate about children and demonstrates commitment to them. Because of this, children make some excellent progress.

The manager is supported by an equally passionate and committed staff team. Strong teamwork contributes to providing children with the best possible care. This has led to increased stability in the staff team and positive relationships between staff and children.

Effective processes are in place to monitor the progress children make. The manager regularly tracks and reviews the progress of each child. She has redesigned monitoring tools to make them more child-friendly. This helps to engage children in their journey and their progress. Children's achievements and successes are celebrated and shared with their families and social workers. One member of staff said, 'As a home, we pride ourselves in working together with multi-agencies to ensure a holistic approach is taken to our young people's care.'

Staff feel extremely well supported by the manager. They have access to regular and effective supervision. The manager is committed to the development of staff. Alongside supervisions, staff are provided with upskilling sessions and daily debriefs. This provides staff with a wide range of opportunities to reflect on their practice and share ideas about how to continue to improve the care that children receive. One member of staff told the inspector, 'I personally think how [name of home] develops and promotes staff is brilliant. The managers are very positive and encourage staff to reach their full potential.' Another member of staff said, 'My overall experience at [name of home] has been one of learning, development and satisfaction.'

Equality and diversity are promoted and celebrated in the home. The manager and staff have brought this to life for children through creative discussions and activities. This ranges from supporting children to understand their own identity to exploring a wide range of diverse topics, to help children understand more about the world, themselves and others. One child's parent said the staff had 'embraced [name of child]'s background. They explored his father's culture with him. They are dedicated to all of his needs. They make a lot of effort.'

The manager has developed highly effective internal monitoring systems. This helps with her oversight of the service and she coordinates this well with the wider management team. The manager welcomes feedback from a range of sources, including parents, teachers, commissioning teams and the independent visitor. She uses this feedback to improve the quality of care provided to children.

The manager has excellent working relationships with partner agencies, schools and family members. The manager has worked hard to build relationships with people who are important to children. This ensures that children are at the centre of a network of support and, as a result, have the best possible experiences. The inspector received feedback from a parent who said, 'They have done wonders for my son. This is the safest and most stable place he has been in.'

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should help children understand how to protect themselves, particularly in relation to online safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, keep the use of alarms on children's bedroom doors under review and only use when necessary to protect children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure all case records include relevant information and that up-to-date statutory documents are received from each child's placing authority. In particular, risk assessments should include all risk management strategies that are in place for children and language used should be recorded in a way that is clear and helpful for staff and children. In addition, updated care plans should be provided for staff to refer to. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: 1275966

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

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

Responsible individual: Nicholas Collins

Registered manager: Laura Campbell

Inspector

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

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