

SC415347

Registered provider: Hillcrest Childrens Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company that runs several children's homes across the country. This home provides care for up to four children who have been affected by adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2020, and she is currently completing her management qualification.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/07/2021	Full	Good
23/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are currently four children living in the home. They are very settled and have lived in the home for several years.

Children make good and sustained progress in the important areas of their lives. This is because they share positive relationships with staff. In addition, staff understand children's needs and recognise the importance of treating each child as an individual. In summarising the quality of care that children receive, one child said, 'This home has changed my life. I wish I could live here forever.'

Staff support children's aspirations and have high expectations for them. Children are fully engaged with their learning and are progressing well at school and college. In relation to one child who has made excellent progress in education, an external professional said that the child 'is progressing well at college and aspires to attend university'. An annual awards event held in the home celebrates children's achievements and successes. Consequently, children feel very proud of themselves.

Staff provide a nurturing approach to support and develop children's independence. They encourage children to participate in independence work. Furthermore, staff help children to develop their social networks with friends and family. This is done sensitively, and children are encouraged to form their own identities in a safe environment without discrimination. As a result, all children become more independent the longer they live in the home, and they grow in confidence.

Staff work hard to capture children's views about the home. They recognise the importance of key-work sessions and hold regular meetings with children. Furthermore, the registered manager monitors the quality of this work and completes direct work with children. This reassures children that their voice is important and improves their self-worth.

Professionals and family members are unanimous in their praise of the home. One external professional said that '[the child] is doing absolutely brilliantly, staff understand [the child's] needs excellently. They are doing a brilliant job and I cannot praise them enough. It truly has been a brilliant placement.' A family member for another child said that they are 'proud of [the child's] achievements and they wish [the child] could stay there forever.'

Overall, staff support children's health needs and ensure that children attend routine and specialist appointments. However, systems for administering children's medication are not consistent with the home's medication policy. Staff were not clear on which medication children were not to be administered. In addition, staff do not always ensure that medication, which has been prescribed for a child, is administered as prescribed. These shortfalls have the potential to compromise the safety of children.

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

Children become safer as a result of living in the home. They say that they feel safe and supported. Children's support plans provide good strategies for staff to follow to promote children's welfare. This support helps some children to make remarkable progress from their starting points. For example, incidents involving self-harm, missing from home and exploitation of children have significantly reduced since the last inspection.

Children rarely go missing from the home. Since the last inspection, one child has gone missing on two occasions. During these incidents, staff followed the child's protocols effectively and worked with the police and external professionals to return the child safely to the home. Staff ensure that return home interviews have been completed within statutory timeframes and intelligence gathered is used to inform children's risk assessments. In addition, the manager works with the home's clinical team to review the incidents and identify further action for support. For example, one child underwent a resilience assessment from a clinician following an incident. This supportive approach reassures children and improves their well-being.

Staff carry out direct work to educate children about internet safety and exploitation. Key-work sessions are of good quality and staff inform this work by using up-to-date resources. These meaningful sessions help to enhance children's knowledge and raise their awareness.

Overall, leaders manage allegations made by children against staff appropriately. They work effectively with external professionals and seek advice from the local authority designated officer. In addition, recommendations raised as a result of internal investigations have been actioned. This means that staff are more alert to the importance of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Consequently, they know what to do if they feel children are at risk of harm.

However, during one investigation, the investigating officer had not completed the relevant training required to lead investigations. Furthermore, senior leaders failed to have oversight or to support the officer with the investigation. This has the potential to compromise the effectiveness of investigations and means intelligence used to safeguard children could be missed.

Staff and leaders respond extremely well to support children when they become anxious. There have been no incidents requiring physical restraint with children since July 2021. The one incident since the last inspection was managed effectively by staff. In addition, consequences are used occasionally by staff to provide opportunities for children to learn from their behaviour. However, on one occasion, when a child's phone was removed, there was no record of the consequence recorded. Failing to record significant information means that staff cannot always be sure that the behaviour management strategies they use are effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is led by an experienced registered manager. She is child focused, approachable and provides consistent support to staff and children in the home. All children spoke positively about the support they receive from the registered manager. They trust her, and one child summarised their feelings by saying, 'I love [the registered manager].'

In contrast, the home has had three different responsible individuals since the last inspection. In addition, some of the current registered manager's leadership systems are not consistently effective in making continual improvements to the home. For example, inspectors identified that leaders had not completed any formal monitoring of the home since June 2022. In addition, the systems failed to identify shortfalls in staff training, children's medication, and children's behaviour management records. These shortfalls have the potential to impact on the quality of care received by children.

The registered manager has not ensured that all staff complete the required qualification to work in the home within the compulsory timescales. Furthermore, the registered manager has not completed the specific management qualification in the required timeframes. This means that not all staff and leaders who care for children are qualified to do this.

Staff receive some training and development which is specific to the needs of the children. However, administration of medication training completed by staff does not improve their practice. In addition, leaders were unable to provide evidence that this training was approved and accredited in line with their policy. Furthermore, wider training is not consistently used effectively to improve staff practice. For example, one member of staff completed 12 online courses on the same day. This does not assure Ofsted that all staff have the skills and up-to-date knowledge to meet children's needs.

Despite some of the shortfalls, staff are very positive about the support they receive from the registered manager. Supervision sessions are regular and of good quality. They help staff to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement. Resources are used to inform the theme of the supervision and staff are regularly asked to consider important safeguarding information. In addition, the manager uses team meetings to 'upskill' and improve practice. As a result, staff grow in confidence and enhance their knowledge.

The registered manager ensures that sufficient staffing levels are in place to meet children's needs. The home's rota is managed effectively and planned to ensure that the home is staffed with consistent staff who know the children. This provides children with reliable care.

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 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</p> <p>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; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, leaders must ensure that staff receive appropriate medication training. In addition, managers appointed to lead on internal investigations must complete the appropriate training and be supported to do so.</p> <p>Leaders must also have clear monitoring and review systems in place to improve staff practice and identify shortfalls in the home.</p>	<p>24 November 2022</p>
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that—</p>	<p>24 November 2022</p>

<p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, leaders must ensure that medication that is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed, and that staff are assessed to be competent in administering medication to children.</p>	
<p>A person may only manage a children’s home if—</p> <p>having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children—</p> <p>the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has—</p> <p>by the relevant date, attained—</p> <p>the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 5 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home; or in the case of a person who was managing a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2017. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i) (2)(c)(i)(ii) (3)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the provider should ensure that the manager achieves the appropriate qualification to perform their role within the required timescales.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p>	<p>24 November 2022</p>

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that—

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;

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the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma").

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a) (5)(a))

In particular, the provider should ensure that staff achieve the appropriate qualification to perform their role within the required timescales.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC415347

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Childrens Services (2) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Nicholas Collins

Registered manager: Lisa Aspinall

Inspectors

Dean Wilton, Social Care Inspector

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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