

1247776

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a limited company. The home provides care and support for up to three young people with learning disabilities.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 November 2020

Previous inspection date: 13 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Sustained effectiveness

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

Leaders and managers have taken a pragmatic approach to COVID-19 to ensure that the home has remained sufficiently staffed and that children's care has not been compromised. Staff guidance on COVID-19 precautions and risk management is clear and up to date. Risks are well understood. Staff follow clear direction on how to minimise risks from COVID-19 and keep children safe.

Children's individual risk assessments address their known vulnerabilities effectively. Staff use the guidance in these documents in their daily practice to address and reduce risks to children's health and well-being. The staff are child-focused and provide children with good-quality care. Children form trusted and secure relationships with the adults who care for them.

One young person who had lived at the home for many years benefited from a well-considered transition plan, which enabled him to successfully move to a more independent placement.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively and with careful and considered planning. All children are treated with dignity and respect. The needs and feelings of children already living in the home are taken into consideration when new children are considered for the home. This ensures good placement matching and allows time for staff to prepare for the arrival of new children.

Children attend school and enjoy access to a range of social activities and recreational opportunities. Where the home lacks specialist sensory and soft play equipment, the staff improvise well to stimulate the children's senses and enjoyment.

The safety of children

Children are protected from harm and benefit from a safe and secure living environment. The staff team works collaboratively to deliver a proactive response to minimise the risk of harm to children. The staff have well-developed strategies in place to keep children safe, and to support children in learning how to keep themselves safe.

The staff understand children's needs and are ambitious for them. Children's risk assessments and placement plans provide staff with clear guidance that aids their shift planning. Children receive help that improves their basic independent living skills. Staff use creative approaches to support children's sense of well-being and achievement.

The manager has acted to ensure that children's plans comprehensively identify children's needs. Children's plans and case records have been significantly improved. Staff are now able to use this information effectively to help them to care for children. Case records reflect children's everyday lives and the work that is undertaken with them.

Staff regularly provide positive experiences for children and staff plan each working shift specifically to meet the needs of children. Effective de-escalation techniques and strategies that are individual to the needs of each child are promoted within team meetings. As a result, restraint is rarely used, and when it is, it is used proportionally. Restraint records are well recorded and include learning points to prevent, and improve management of, future incidents. Staff working within the home are clear about, and follow, procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child.

Leaders and managers

An experienced manager manages the home effectively. The manager has taken effective action to address the requirements and recommendations from earlier inspections. As a result, the culture in the home has improved and staff are more sensitive towards children's needs.

The home is properly staffed to meet the needs of the children living there. Managers and staff receive regular supervision that is focused on the children and on their own practice. Supervision is recorded effectively. However, not all actions are followed through effectively.

Systems to support leaders and managers to monitor the progress that individual children make are not embedded. An updated monitoring schedule is helping to identify areas for development to improve the quality of care provided to children. Leaders and managers use learning to help them to improve the experiences and care of children.

The manager has updated the staff training, development and induction activities. These activities are now focused on ensuring that staff receive the relevant training to support the specific needs of each child. To ensure the consistent safe administration of medication, staff need refresher training and closer monitoring of their practice.

The staff team works collaboratively to provide children with consistency and stability. Staff understand their responsibilities and accountabilities during each shift. This provides the staff team with a sense of shared ownership in its practice.

Staff report that they are well led and managed. The manager has a child-centred approach and is inclusive with decisions taken to improve the quality of care children receive.

The manager and responsible individual ensure that the physical environment is kept to a generally good standard and meets the needs of children. However, some areas of the home lack homely touches, such as soft furnishings.

The manager is developing a culture in the home that is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. The ethos and objectives of the home are demonstrated in practice.

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
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. 2. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— (b) 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))	30/11/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees— (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30/11/2020

Recommendations

- Children's homes staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home's plan for their care. Each child's talents and interests should be understood and nurtured, with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonable. Staff should also support children to try activities that are 'new' for them, where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1247776

Registered provider: Keys Group Progressive Care & Education Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Lisa McCloskey

Registered manager: Peter Crimmins

Inspector

Paul Thomas, Social Care Inspector

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