

2513340

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and was registered in January 2020. The home cares for four children who have social and emotional difficulties.

The home has an experienced manager who started in May 2020. The manager holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential childcare. She has applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 September 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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

Children receive child-centred care and support that reflects their individual needs. Staff show a genuine commitment to child-centred planning that puts the child at the heart of the planning process.

During the last few months, the staff have respected how important it is for children to be able to stay in touch with their families. Staff have sensitively used technology so that children have benefited from quality time with their families.

Staff understand the importance of education in helping children to aspire and to have goals for their future. During recent months, the staff have supported children's learning within the home. One child arrived at the home with a history of poor school attendance. Through the encouragement and support of the staff, the child has managed to achieve an award in English and has now applied to go to college.

Staff have ensured that preventative measures have been brought in when a child showed symptoms of COVID-19. The child needed to self-isolate for a week and arrangements were put in place to have a member of staff to self-isolate alongside the child so that support was not compromised.

The safety of children

During the early part of lockdown, children's challenging behaviour escalated as they struggled to understand the new rules. Staff were good at responding to the changing needs of the children and sought the help of the home's therapist to find new ways of helping the children to get through this challenging period.

Child-centred approaches have helped the staff to develop a positive behaviour culture within the home. This has included the implementation of behaviour support plans and preventative strategies. However, when reviewing these plans, there has been one omission. This resulted in a strategy that was no longer being used still showing in the risk assessment. This omission has the potential to cause confusion and inconsistency in the staff approach to managing children's behaviour.

When children have gone missing from the home, staff have been diligent in following children's plans and trying to find them in the local community. Due to restrictions, children have missed out on receiving an independent return home interview. This has left a gap in staff receiving independent help in understanding why children have gone missing.

Managers have responded appropriately to children's concerns and complaints. When allegations have been raised, these have been reported to the relevant agencies and investigated. However, managers have not ensured that notifications of serious incidents have been promptly reported to Ofsted. This prevents the regulator from having essential information about the care of children.

Managers have ensured that staff are afforded the right opportunities for their continuous learning and development. Training is secured to enable staff to have the right skills to match the needs of the children. During the period of lockdown, some staff training has been missed. This has resulted in some staff having a delay in receiving refresher training.

Leaders and managers

The manager and staff have continued, despite restrictions, to get children involved in varied activities. With a lot of creativity, the staff have got the children involved in redecorating the home and in recycling old furniture.

The independent visitor has carried out virtual monthly visits during recent months to monitor the progress and well-being of the children. Despite the visits being done remotely, by using technology the independent visitor has been able to review records, speak to children and their families and consult professionals.

Managers have maintained strong links with social workers and have made difficult decisions when these are in the best interests of the children living at the home. This resulted in one child's placement being ended. This was managed with the full engagement of the child's placing local authority.

The manager has carried out a review of the service and ensured that staff, children and other stakeholders have been able to contribute to the review. Despite carrying out this review, the manager has forgotten to send the final report into Ofsted. This creates a missed opportunity to share with the regulator the manager's evaluation of the home.

The manager has ensured that supervision opportunities have remained available to staff. These opportunities have enabled staff to reflect on their practice.

Children have benefited from having a consistent staff team. However, the rota does not always reflect when there have been changes in the staff. Consequently, there is no accurate record of which staff have worked with children on any given day.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	30/10/2020
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b))	30/10/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	30/10/2020

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 ((4)(a)))	30/10/2020
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Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2513340

Registered provider: Keys Care Ltd

Registered provider address: C/o Pinsent Masons Llp, The Soloist Building, 1 Lanyon Place, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT1 3LP

Responsible individual: Dale Berry

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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