

2513340

Registered provider: Keys Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and was registered in January 2020. The home cares for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 3 and 4 September 2021 to carry out an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the home's registration in January 2020, seven children have been admitted to the home. Since September 2020, three children have left the home as the manager has served notice. This is because staff could no longer meet their needs. At the time of this inspection, there were three children living in the home. One of these children was due to leave the home as the manager had served notice as staff were unable to keep her safe or meet her needs. This demonstrates that the home's admission process is ineffective and several children have been admitted to the home and cared for by staff who cannot meet their needs.

On occasion, there have been insufficient staff on duty to safely supervise and care for the children. As a result, children have not received the necessary support they require to progress or to keep them safe.

Staff are not providing care as outlined in children's care plans. Key-working sessions are not linked to children's goals or specific difficulties that they need support with. These failings mean that children are not being supported to make progress.

The house is not a clean and well-maintained home for children to live in. Most areas of the home, including the children's bedrooms, show signs of damage and require a deep clean or redecoration. For example, one window in the lounge was boarded up due to being broken. One child did not have a curtain or blind on her bedroom window. As a result, children do not live in a homely environment that protects their privacy.

Progress in education is varied. One child attends college regularly, however, the other two children frequently refuse to attend school. The encouragement offered by the staff team has not been sufficient to motivate the children to attend school.

The manager and staff have failed to sufficiently support one child to prepare for adulthood. Staff's strategies to support the child to build their confidence and self-esteem have been ineffective. As a result, the child has made limited progress in their independence skills and engaging in the wider community.

Planned meetings between children and staff do not take place frequently. This is a missed opportunity for children and staff to meet as a household to explore with children their experiences of living at the home, influence the care they receive and address any conflict positively. In addition, staff do not support children to read and contribute to their care plans. This prevents children from sharing their views.

Despite the shortfalls identified, staff know the children well and children told the inspector that they like the staff team. Children seek staff out to spend time with them.

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

The staff's supervision and monitoring of children is poor and fails to safeguard children. Staff have been unable to prevent children from harming one another. There have been occasions when children have physically assaulted each other. One child told the inspector that she does not feel safe living in the home. The poor supervision of children has placed them at risk of harm.

Children have frequently physically assaulted staff. On occasion, this has resulted in staff sustaining serious injuries. Due to staffing shortages, there have been times when staff have continued to work on shift after sustaining injuries that required medical attention. Strategies put in place by the manager were not sufficient to prevent further incidents.

One child told the inspector that he is bullied. The manager has failed to record bullying in children's case records. Despite being aware of the risk of bullying, staff have failed to take effective action to protect children from harming one another.

The manager has not ensured that staff carry out room searches when required. Despite several incidents of children using items in their bedroom to self-harm, only one room search has taken place. This means that strategies available to staff to manage risks to children are not being used. This places children at risk of harm.

Risk management of children is inadequate. Risk assessments are not up to date and do not always reflect children's known risks. Risk assessments have not been reviewed in a timely manner following incidents. They fail to provide staff with sufficient guidance to safeguard children and protect them from harm. Furthermore, staff fail to routinely read children's risk assessments and are therefore not informed of the most up-to-date strategies to keep children safe.

When children present with new risky behaviours, the manager fails to ensure that risk assessments are implemented quickly. For example, a serious incident took place in a moving vehicle. The manager wrote a risk assessment, however, at the time of the inspection, this had not been printed off or shared with staff. The staff on shift during the inspection were not aware of the new interventions to be used. This lack of oversight has an adverse impact on the safety of children and the provision of care.

Staff use alarms on children's bedroom doors. This is not always risk assessed and risk assessments that are in place are not regularly reviewed. As a result, there are restrictions and monitoring of children that may not be required.

Staff are not supporting children to understand or minimise their own risks. Managers have failed to ensure that staff carry out direct work with children

following an incident. This is a missed opportunity to help children to develop an understanding of their own risks and to learn to keep themselves safe.

On occasion, managers have not taken prompt action in response to safeguarding concerns. There have been delays in notifying the children's social workers and the designated officer of allegations. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of one serious incident. These oversights have the potential to compromise the safety of children.

Staff frequently physically restrain children for their own safety. These interventions are appropriate. However, on occasion, the manager has not reviewed the intervention within the required timeframe to ensure that the intervention was necessary and safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The staff team is relatively new and inexperienced, and they have not received training in important areas relevant to children's risks, such as going missing from home, self-harm and bullying. Most staff have not completed the required level 3 diploma and one staff member is out of the required timeframe for achieving this award. Furthermore, staff are not trained in the home's therapeutic approach as stated in the home's statement of purpose. This means that children are cared for by staff who are not provided with the knowledge and skills that would help them to safely care for children.

The manager has failed to ensure that there is an accurate roster in place that records the planned and actual hours worked by all staff. As a result, these documents cannot be relied on to identify when staff have been at work. This means that Ofsted cannot be assured that children are suitably and safely cared for.

The manager does not have a monitoring system in place that allows for sufficient oversight of the home. The manager's review of documents has not identified errors or omissions in paperwork. As a result, most of the home's paperwork, including that relating to sanctions, key-working sessions, medication audits and risk assessments, is of poor quality. This poor monitoring has a negative impact on the safety of children and the quality of care.

The manager has failed to take swift and effective action to address the shortfalls in the home that she was aware of. As a result, the progress seen at the assurance visit in September 2020 has not been sustained.

The manager has failed to provide Ofsted with an updated statement of purpose within the required timeframe. This hinders the regulator from having oversight between inspections.

Staff do not receive regular supervision to support them in their role. In addition, staff team meetings do not always take place. This demonstrates that staff are not sufficiently supported in their role and affects the consistency and quality of care

provided to children. Despite these shortfalls, staff told the inspector that they are well supported by the managers, who they described as approachable and available.

In response to the widespread concerns identified at this inspection, Ofsted issued a notice restricting the accommodation on 21 October 2021.

Following this inspection, three compliance notices were issued, under regulation 11 (the positive relationships standard), regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard).

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vi)(vii)(c)(i)) This relates to ensuring that the home environment is suitably furnished and decorated. Also, to ensuring that staff appropriately support children with their independence work and prepare them for adult life.	15 December 2021
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—	28 November 2021

mutual respect and trust;

an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and

positive responses to other children and adults

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and

that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

(Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(x)(xii)(xiii)(b))

The provider must ensure that all children are supported to understand their risks and behaviours and the impact on themselves and others.

Also, to ensuring that any bullying is recorded and responded to appropriately.

*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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(vi)(b)) This relates to ensuring that children’s risk assessments are in place, up to date and accurate, that staff read and follow risk assessments to keep children safe and that when there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare sufficient action is taken to safeguard the child, including room searches. In addition, that staff support children to learn to identify risks and how to keep themselves safe.	28 November 2021
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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;	28 November 2021

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. 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)(d)(e)(f)(h)) The provider must ensure that there is effective monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the home and that shortfalls in practice are identified and addressed. In addition, that staff undertake all relevant training to meet children's needs and that there are sufficient staff employed and on shift to meet the needs of the children. Also, to ensuring that there are adequate numbers of staff on shift at all times to provide consistent care to children.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to—	15 December 2021

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)) The provider must only admit children whose needs they can meet. In addition, the provider must ensure that children have planned admissions and discharges from the home. This also relates to staff supporting children to access and contribute to their records and plans.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) The provider must ensure that they provide Ofsted with an updated statement of purpose within the required timeframe.	15 December 2021
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) This relates specifically to ensuring that regular audits of medication take place and any concerns with medication are thoroughly investigated.	15 December 2021
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; (Regulation 24 (1)(a)) The provider must ensure that risk assessments are in place for the use of bedroom door alarms and that these are regularly reviewed.	15 December 2021

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"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to 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; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This relates to ensuring that all staff achieve the relevant qualification within the required timeframe.	15 December 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) The provider should ensure that all staff receive regular supervision.	15 December 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the register or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	15 December 2021

The provider must ensure that the registered manager completes a full review of any physical intervention within the required timeframe.	
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)) This relates to ensuring that the staff rota shows planned and actual hours worked by all staff.	15 December 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) This relates to ensuring that the register manager notifies Ofsted of all incidents considered serious.	15 December 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2513340

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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: Sarah Avery

Inspector

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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