

2513341

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children with emotional or social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The registered manager left in June 2024. A new manager has been appointed, who is planning to apply to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 July 2024

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

Date of last inspection: 21 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2023	Full	Good
14/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
07/07/2021	Full	Outstanding
10/03/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides a warm and welcoming environment. The children have personalised bedrooms and look after their own pets. Children said that they enjoy living in the home, with one child rating the home as 10 out of 10.

At times, children have struggled to engage in formal education, leading to limited attendance. Staff continue to encourage them with their education and offer learning opportunities, as well as advocating for children to attend suitable provisions. Education staff say the home's staff go above and beyond, and that communication is excellent.

Children like to have fun with staff and enjoy a range of activities, including rock climbing, walking in the countryside and going on holidays to the coast. Staff are committed to ensuring that children have fun. One member of staff spoke proudly about a child, saying the child had recently helped them to make flower baskets for the garden. Staff's approach supports children to develop new interests and build positive relationships.

Children are registered with local health services and are supported to engage in clinical sessions. This helps to improve children's psychological and emotional health. One child has refused to attend routine appointments for a significant period of time. One-to-one sessions with the child to encourage attendance have not been held on a regular basis. This is a missed opportunity to reflect on the barriers and understand if any strategies could be implemented to reduce these and encourage the child to attend appointments.

Children's written documents are clear and up to date. This supports staff in providing individualised care. However, children's plans do not always capture their wishes and show how children's feedback and feelings have been considered when planning care.

When children move on from or into the home, managers and staff ensure that a thoughtful and meaningful transition takes place. This helps children to settle and become familiar with their new surroundings. The manager reviews children's time at the home when they move out. This allows the manager to consider the impact the home has had on the children's future.

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

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and know how to keep them safe. Care is well organised and staff consistently seek input from other professionals to inform behaviour management strategies. This has included providing children with additional support and supervision, in line with their assessed needs.

Children have trusted and secure relationships with staff and this strengthens their feelings of safety. There have been no incidents of children being absent or missing from

home. Furthermore, there have been no complaints or incidents where staff have needed to use physical intervention.

There have been some incidents of children harming themselves. Staff are creative in their approach to reducing this risk and they respond to children with care and nurture. Staff have been successful in supporting children to implement alternative strategies. For example, when one child is feeling worried, they eat their favourite foods or use fidget toys from their self-soothe box. This practice helps children to feel safe in the home and to develop an understanding of their emotions.

Children have disclosed to staff information about their previous experiences. Managers have worked with external agencies to respond to these concerns and children are supported to understand what happens with the information they have shared. However, on one occasion, the police were not notified of a concern in a timely manner. This could have potentially led to delays with the investigation.

Staff complete routine checks on children's phones, as agreed in their plans. However, when concerns are identified, staff do not always explore these with children. This is a missed opportunity to educate children about risk and assess if additional support is required.

There are clear arrangements for safe storage and administration of medication. There has been one medication error that was addressed swiftly by managers, and action plans were drawn up to prevent further errors.

The home environment is safe. Regular health and safety checks take place in the home. Managers have a good understanding of the local area. When it was identified that there was a risk that a child may not evacuate the home in the event of a fire, staff created a picture sheet to educate and remind the child of what steps to take, and liaised with emergency services.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager is experienced and suitably qualified. At the time of the inspection, she had been in post for two weeks. She knows the home well as she was previously the deputy manager. She is dedicated and child-focused and speaks about the children fondly and with pride.

Staff say that they feel supported, enjoy working with the new manager and have confidence in her leadership. As a result, the care provided to children continues to be stable and consistent. Staff have high aspirations for children and can identify areas of development for the home. The staff team's enthusiastic and informed approach to care supports improvement.

Staff and managers have effective working relationships with a range of external professionals. Children's social workers speak positively about the care provided.

Staff are provided with a good range of training. This includes training specific to children's presenting needs. To complement training, staff review children's needs using relevant research in regular team meetings. The in-house clinical team provides staff with further advice when needed. This comprehensive support has increased staff's knowledge.

The home has a workforce development plan. However, this plan does not include all required information about timescales for induction or details about managing and improving performance. This fails to ensure that expectations for staff are clear.

The manager's monitoring systems have been effective in recognising shortfalls in practice and implementing learning. The responsible individual supports the manager effectively, is aware of the home's strengths and is passionate about improving practice and supporting the staff to achieve good outcomes for children.

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, The 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. (Regulation 6 (1) (2)(b)(vi)) This specifically relates to ensuring direct work takes place when children are refusing to attend medical appointments and when concerns are identified by staff when completing phone checks.	19 August 2024
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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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.	19 August 2024

(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(b))

In particular, managers must ensure disclosures of historical abuse are referred promptly to all safeguarding agencies.

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction and probation, and detail the process for managing and improving poor performance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- 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. Information should be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child and consider children's views on any relevant plans. ('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: 2513341

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Gemma Moore

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

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