

2548418

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2022.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 2025

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: 6 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2024	Full	Good
03/01/2024	Full	Good
17/01/2023	Full	Good
21/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home environment is welcoming and safe. Staff actively involve children in the day-to-day running of the home, such as choosing home furnishings or supporting each child's hobbies. Listening to children's views is a priority in this home. Children know their rights and are comfortable to talk about things that they do not agree with or want to change at the home.

Staff develop positive relationships with the children and support them through natural conversations, akin to the dynamics of a family home. This helps children to reflect on their own needs and accept help when required, including specialist support. For example, a member of staff sensitively supported a child to consider their neurodiversity and attend a specialist appointment. Another child was supported to reflect on their emotional needs and consider therapeutic support to overcome their past traumatic experiences. Staff offer children support before and after their health and specialist appointments. This helps the children to better manage their expectations and worries.

Staff encourage the children's relationships with their friends and their immediate and extended family. They offer children practical help, such as transportation and emotional support, during difficult family times, such as bereavement. There is good communication between staff and the children's families. Staff also support children's relationships with previous carers, in accordance with the children's wishes and feelings. This provides consistency and stability for the children, knowing that the people who are important to them work together.

All children are in education or attend alternative educational activities while waiting for an education placement. The manager and staff have good insight into the children's educational needs. Staff at education provisions provided positive feedback about the ability of staff to promote the children's educational needs. For example, the manager ensured that school staff understood the reasons for a child's behaviour, and they collaborated well with the school in drafting a bespoke timetable for the child. Staff and the manager also identified additional educational activities that supported the child's preparation for independence.

The children living at the home are all over the age of 12, with some approaching independence. Staff know the children's capabilities well and support the children to develop independent living skills, in accordance with their individual needs and stages of development. Children take part in shopping and cooking activities at the home and staff teach them budgeting skills. Managers have reflected on how to further support the children's independent learning by relaxing some of the restrictions around hazardous substances, such as laundry detergent, while keeping the children safe.

Children experience positive endings when they move from the home, whether this is planned or unplanned. The transitions are well documented, reflecting children's

progress in comparison with their starting points. This helps children to better understand their personal history and life experiences, should they wish to access their records later in life. Staff remain in contact with children and support them to settle into their new homes. One child, who moved to semi-independent living, appreciated their experience at the home saying, 'I have learnt a lot at the home, and I am grateful for everything all the staff have taught me.'

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

Children feel safe at the home and staff are able to keep them safe. Staff know the children well and understand the risks associated with each child's behaviour, such as criminal exploitation, internet safety, bullying, going missing from home, concerns related to sexually harmful behaviour or self-injurious behaviour. The risk assessments and behaviour support plans are effective and provide staff with clear, individualised advice about how to support children on a day-to-day basis. This includes when children may be in crisis situations, or when they need support to take age-appropriate risks as part of learning to become independent.

There has been a small number of missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. Staff are robust in their response. There is close collaboration with the children's social workers, the police and the children's families to locate the children when they go missing and to identify safety plans to reduce the risks associated with the children's behaviours. Return home interviews are requested within relevant timescales and children have an opportunity to reflect on their behaviours or share their worries with their social workers and the staff at the home.

Physical intervention and restraint are rarely used in this home. When this happens, it is as a last resort to protect the child, staff or other children living at the home. Staff are able to implement less-intrusive strategies to manage children's behaviour, such as negotiation or diversion to other activities.

Staff implement child-centred and age-appropriate boundaries and help children to understand what is acceptable and unacceptable at the home. Children are supported to manage conflict effectively, including age-appropriate use of restorative practices, which helps to improve the relationships between the children. For example, staff appropriately addressed racist comments made by some of the children against another child, helping them to reflect on their comments and the impact on the other person. An education professional noted that staff treat any difficulties in relationships between the children with empathy, and support all of the children involved.

Children know how to complain and they feel comfortable to do so. There has been a high number of allegations made against members of staff since the last inspection. The manager and the responsible individual take children's complaints and allegations seriously and address these fairly, proportionately and in line with the provider's ethos and safeguarding policies. The manager works well with the children's social workers and the local authority's designated officer when addressing children's allegations. The manager keeps children informed about the stages of their complaint and supports them

to understand the outcome. When appropriate, the manager uses restorative methods to support children and staff to repair their relationship at the end of the complaints process.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is efficiently managed by an experienced and permanent manager who has been in post since October 2022. The manager has high expectations for the children living at the home. This is reflected in their personalised support plans, the positive relationships between staff and the children, and good advocacy for the children's needs.

The management team consults with staff before implementing significant changes to the children's routines or to their behaviour management responses. Staff feel valued and managers appreciate their contribution to supporting the children. Innovative suggestions from staff are incorporated in the day-to-day practice of the home. For example, key workers update staff about each child's goals and progress on a daily basis.

Mandatory training for staff is up to date. Staff benefit from additional specialist training to enable them to meet the children's individual and changing needs. They access consultations with the provider's internal specialists, which helps them to better understand the children's needs and behaviours. The manager has a good reviewing system in place to ensure that the training activities lead to safe and child-centred practice.

The manager is supported by an efficient responsible individual and a dedicated deputy manager. The manager uses the internal auditing specialists and the recommendations made by the monthly independent visitor to improve the children's experiences at the home. The management team and staff are reflective and learn from practice, including using feedback from external professionals and children's families, the children's complaints and their lived experiences. Managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have a clear plan to address the identified shortfalls.

The manager consults with the local partners and agencies when identifying and reviewing the risks to children. The manager also takes appropriate action following incidents to ensure that the children's needs are met and that they are protected. They notify the children's social workers, parents and the police, when necessary, of all serious incidents related to the welfare and protection of the children living at the home. However, not all serious events are reported to Ofsted. This limits the regulator's ability to monitor how the provider ensures that the children at the home are always safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home that the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 2548418

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: Zoe Tompkins

Registered manager: Rachel Smith

Inspector

Claudia Poienar, Social Care Inspector

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