

2570535

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a large private company. It is registered to care for up to four children with a variety of complex needs, aged between eight and 17 years.

The registered manager has worked in the home since it opened and is qualified to level 5 in health and social care management.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

A virtual monitoring visit was undertaken on 10 and 11 February 2021. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 8 and 9 February 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not applicable		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are cared for by staff who want the best for children. Inspectors observed positive relationships between children and staff. Despite this, inspectors felt that not all children were progressing as well as they could have been.

Staff have developed plans which inform staff how to care for and develop children. However, the information within those plans is limited and some plans are out of date. This lack of detail and regular review means staff are unclear about how they support children's progress.

Despite the shortfalls, some children at the home are making progress and have done well in education, participated in voluntary work and have been encouraged to follow their interests. However, one child is refusing to engage in education. Lack of clarity in this child's plans means that staff permit her to see friends on a school day instead of undertaking learning activities. Consequently, this does not instil in the child the importance of education.

Staff help children to keep in touch with their families and friends. When face-to-face visits have not been possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, then children have kept in touch using technology. Staff take children to, and support, visits with families, while other children can travel independently. Consequently, relationships are maintained. For one child, these relationships have improved significantly and they are now spending more time at home.

Some children at the home have developed unhealthy eating habits. Staff have not developed plans which will help children learn about healthy eating, portion control and the importance of exercise. Consequently, as children become more independent this could mean they continue with their poor eating habits, which could affect their long-term health.

Staff have been creative in keeping children busy. Children have had opportunities to experience a wide range of activities with trips out to theme parks, places of interest, shopping and going on holiday. Staff have also made sure children have had birthday parties and celebrated Christmas and Easter.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff have developed risk management plans for children. However, some details contained in these documents are inaccurate and plans have not been regularly updated with new information. For one child, there was no missing from care protocol, despite having an assessment to use his bedroom door alarm in case he goes missing. Staff and interim managers have not signed children's risk

assessments to show that they have read and understood them. These omissions mean that those caring for children at the home do not have up-to-date knowledge of children's risks and strategies to keep them safe.

Children do not regularly go missing from the home, but when they do staff take some action. However, on one occasion there was a delay in reporting a child missing. Missing from home records could be clearer, for example showing what staff have done and when. One child's missing protocol does not tell staff what they needed to do if the child went missing from the home, only what to do if she does not return home from being out in the community, or is seen getting into a car. These shortfalls do not fully promote children's welfare and safety.

Staff have not developed robust behaviour management plans for children. Lack of detail means there are inconsistent approaches and some sanctions appear punitive. For example, a child lost access to the internet after he was seen picking at a car door handle. Staff also use the same sanction for one child repeatedly, which shows it is not effective in helping to change the child's behaviour. Some children also receive numerous positive consequences where another child receives none. This lack of consistency and evaluation of behaviour management strategies does not help children to learn from their behaviour and understand the impact that this can have on themselves and others.

Staff respond to children's risks and negative relationships by having a strategy of keeping them apart. Staff have not developed any plans to aid children's learning about appropriate behaviours between each other. Consequently, the risks are managed, but children do not know how to develop positive relationships with others they live with.

Staff rarely need to use physical interventions, but when used they are appropriate and proportionate.

Managers have responded appropriately to concerns which have been raised, acting promptly to safeguard children.

Managers have undertaken safer recruitment checks, ensuring that new staff to the home are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home is managed by an experienced, qualified practitioner. The manager has had a period of time off due to ill health. During this period, the home was overseen by other managers within the organisation. This arrangement caused inconsistencies in the management of the home and, as a result, has limited the home's progress.

There have been shortfalls in management oversight of the home, which have meant that children's plans have not always been regularly monitored to ensure that they are up to date. Interim managers have not familiarised themselves with

children's plans. These omissions have contributed to the inconsistent care given by staff and the limited progress of some children living at the home.

Managers have not taken action to meet the two requirements raised at the monitoring visit in February 2021. They have not ensured that risk assessments are clear and accurate or made sure children's plans are up to date. Although a plan to address shortfalls has been made in recent weeks, managers have been slow to prioritise and bring about improvements.

Managers have undertaken staff supervisions, though at times these have not been undertaken in line with company policy. Consequently, staff have not always had an opportunity to reflect on their practice.

Despite COVID-19, staff have received training on a variety of topics. However, staff have not had training in global developmental delay, child mental health, sexually harmful behaviours or eating disorders. Consequently, staff do not have all the skills and knowledge they need to care for the children living at the home.

Managers had identified shortfalls at the home in the weeks prior to this inspection and have implemented an improvement plan for the home and the registered manager. The responsible individual will monitor to ensure that progress is made in the quality of care given to the 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, 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(ix)) Specifically, that education is promoted as important, children have routine and structure which encourages participation.	22 October 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c))	22 October 2021

Specifically, that children are helped to understand the importance of healthy eating, exercise and portion control.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— 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 each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b)) Specifically, that children have opportunities to learn how to form positive relationships and be tolerant and accepting of others.	22 October 2021
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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)) Specifically, that children's risk assessments are in place, regularly reviewed and staff understand those risk assessments and follow them. This is a repeat requirement.	22 October 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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)(c)(f)(h)) Specifically, that managers have robust monitoring systems in place and that they are aware of the details within children's plans. That managers should ensure that staff have training to meet the needs of children living at the home, such as training in global developmental delay, child mental health, sexually harmful behaviours and eating disorders.	22 October 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(ii)(c))	22 October 2021

Specifically, that the home's placement care plans are up to date, accurate, have sufficient detail to ensure consistency of care, that staff understand those plans and follow them. This is a repeat requirement.	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1)) Specifically, that sanctions used with children are proportionate and a learning opportunity.	22 October 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) Specifically, that staff receive supervision in line with the company policy.	22 October 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13

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: 2570535

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

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

Responsible individual: Christine Bird

Registered manager: Amanda Wills

Inspectors

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector
Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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