

# 2570535

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in May 2020 and is owned by a large private company. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The registered manager is experienced and holds a level 5 qualification in health and social care management.

### Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 10 May 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 10/05/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 23/08/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 22/03/2022      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 08/09/2021      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home. No children have moved out.

Children like living in the home and are making good progress. Staff understand the children's needs and provide individualised care. Children have positive relationships with staff that are based on respect and trust. They have structure and routine to their days and enjoy a range of activities, including holidays and skateboarding. They also attend clubs, which provides opportunities for social development. The care staff provide gives the children stability and helps them to feel settled.

All children attend education that is specific and appropriate to their needs. Staff work hard to maintain good attendance at school. One child receives a hybrid of educational settings that works well for them and enhances their educational experience. Educational professionals are unanimous in their praise of the home and its impact on outcomes for children.

Staff support children to spend time with the people who are important to them, helping them to maintain those relationships. Children enjoy time spent with their family. These positive experiences have, for one child, enabled an increase in family time.

Children are supported to maintain good health. They are registered with relevant services and attend appointments with health professionals. They are encouraged to eat healthily and participate in physical activities. Where children have complex health conditions, the home takes a robust approach to ensure that their specific needs are met and that their condition is well managed.

Children's cultural needs are well considered. Children have been supported to explore other cultures and broaden their experiences and understanding. For example, regular themed nights take place in the home, which includes decorating the home and trying foods from different cultures. One child also enjoyed a visit to a temple to develop their understanding of cultures different from their own.

The home is generally decorated and furnished to a high standard, which makes it feel warm and welcoming. Children's bedrooms are personalised, with posters and bed coverings which match their interests. This helps to build children's sense of belonging. However, there are aspects of the environment which detract from the homely feel. For example, some areas of the home are inaccessible to children and there are alarms on all children's bedroom doors. There is no clear rationale as to why these measures are universally in place or any plans to review them. In addition, one bedroom window does not have a suitable covering to block out light to aid sleep. Visible carpet stains and pest control boxes in the garden also take away from the homely feel.

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

Staff understand the risks relating to the children in their care and know how to best support them. Children's plans are well documented and provide staff with clear guidance to keep children safe. Children say that they feel safe living at the home.

Staff promote positive behaviour. They use a sensitive approach to help children recognise when they have been unkind, such as during incidents where discriminatory language has been used.

Staff have a good understanding of the triggers which may lead to an escalation of behaviour. They respond quickly and use children's individual strategies to reduce the risk of behaviours escalating. For example, staff recognised that one child's negative behaviour increased when there were unfamiliar staff working in the home. They took action to ensure that the child is now cared for by familiar adults. As a result of staff's practice, there has been little need to use physical intervention and no incidents of children going missing from care.

Complaints and allegations made by children are taken seriously. The registered manager ensures that complaints and allegations are acted on and appropriately managed and that they work closely with partner agencies to safeguard children. On one occasion, staff did not immediately report an allegation. This delay was addressed by the manager and the outcome of the allegation was well communicated to the child. This reinforces to children that they will be listened to and action will be taken to keep them safe.

Staff use consequences and rewards that are proportionate to help promote positive behaviours. Children are supported to understand the impact of their behaviour and to understand what behaviour is expected and acceptable.

Children are cared for by staff who have undergone the necessary recruitment checks. This helps to ensure that staff who work at the home are safe to do so.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Since the last inspection, there has been a period of instability in the leadership of the home. The registered manager had an unplanned absence for three months. The deputy manager then left shortly afterwards. This was followed by a period during which one of the senior care workers stepped up as acting manager supported by the responsible individual. Although this did not have an impact on the children's progress and experiences, it did lead to some shortfalls in the continuity of the service. For example, staff were not consistently receiving supervision to enable them to reflect on their practice and development needs.

The registered manager maintains oversight of the home through regular monitoring and auditing. This has been effective in identifying some areas for improvement. For example, a medication error was picked up during routine auditing. This enabled prompt

action to be taken to ensure that there was no harm. Refresher training and reassessment of staff competencies in administering medicines was provided to prevent reoccurrence. However, the manager's monitoring systems did not pick up on other areas relating to the environment that also required consideration.

While children's records are generally clear and comprehensive, there are some areas of recording that need improvement. For example, discussions with children are not always detailed, support plans are not always updated in a timely way and one risk assessment contains details relating to another child. However, other records are accurate and clear and there is no evident impact on children relating to recording shortfalls.

The registered manager has not challenged effectively when there were delays from other services in the provision of care and treatment, such as the provision of therapy and medication reviews. Therefore, children do not always receive timely support for their needs.

The manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and the action they need to take to deliver improvements. This has focused on improving staffing levels and developing the staff team before bringing any further children into the home. This reduces the reliance on agency staff and ensures that staff are sufficiently prepared and skilled for another child to move into the home.

The home has a positive management culture. Staff feel well supported by the management team and like working at the home. Senior management considered the needs of the registered manager to safely return to work, providing support for them to continue their role in leading the home. This helps to ensure the stability of the workforce caring for the children.

The manager has ambitions for the children. They have a good understanding of the children's needs and the progress they are making. There is good communication with professionals, and feedback from professionals and family members is positive.

## 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       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.<br/>(Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that there is a clear and appropriate rationale for restricting children's access to areas in the home and for the continued use of alarms on bedrooms doors. These measures must be kept under review.</p> | 31 August 2024 |
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 31 August 2024 |

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| In particular, the registered manager must actively challenge relevant authorities when there is a delay to children receiving the services required to meet their needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff receive regular supervision to enable them to reflect on practices and performance to support the continued improvement of the home.</p> | 31 August 2024 |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that is homely and meets children's needs. This specifically relates to ensuring a pleasant garden environment, appropriate coverings for all bedroom windows and cleanliness of carpeted areas. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are appropriately detailed, accurate and kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

## 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:** Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Karla Dovey

**Registered manager:** Victoria Lindup

## Inspectors

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector  
Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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