

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	29/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC005204
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered person address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, New Hall Hey Road, ROSSENDALE, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Tracey Fayers
Inspector	Michelle Bacon

Inspection date	29/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Children and young people do not have consistently positive relationships with each other and staff. They are unsettled and show challenging and violent behaviour. The staff have struggled to manage children and young people's emotions and behaviour, and resolve confrontations safely.
- The management team have been overwhelmed with the tasks of settling a new staff team and helping children and young people to feel safe. The home does not have a full complement of staff with the right skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children and young people.
- Child protection concerns are not managed appropriately. There is a clear lack of distinction between direct allegations and general complaints. As a result, allegations arising from staff practice are not being properly identified and investigated to a satisfactory conclusion.
- Children and young people do not always feel listened to about life in the home. They do not feel that their worries are taken seriously and sorted out. As a result they do not feel safe and protected.
- The lack of robust management oversight of all records and incidents in the home, limits managers understanding of what is happening on a day-to-day basis and their ability to ensure that the welfare and safety of children and young people are promoted.
- The quality of restraint records is poor. They do not provide a clear picture of what happened; the records are often illegible, the signatures of the authors are unidentifiable, descriptions of the incidents are confusing and conflicting, and little attention is paid to detail about staff's attempts to de-escalate challenging situations.

The children's home strengths

- Children and young people have regular access to the organisation's therapeutic team to meet their psychological and emotional needs.
- They have excellent attendance and participation in their education. Their achievements are celebrated and they engage in activities in the local community, such as rugby and swimming.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must- (2)(a) ensure that staff- (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback about the quality of the home's care; (b) ensure that each child- (i) is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support.	30/11/2015
11: The positive relationships standard* In order to meet the quality standard the provider must ensure- (a) that staff- (i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; (iv) help each child to develop and practice skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (viii) strive to gain each child's respect and trust;	30/11/2015

(x) 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 do the same; (xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; (xiii) have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.	
12: The protection of children standard* In order to meet the protection of children standard the provider must ensure- (a) that staff – (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; (b) 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; (e) that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.	30/11/2015
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the provider must-	30/11/2015

2 (a) 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; (b) ensure the team work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (f) 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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on- (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided by the home.	
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that- 3(a) within 24 hours of the use of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes- (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	30/11/2015

(viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measures; (b) 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- (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and (c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is run and managed by a large private provider. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/10/2014	Full	Outstanding
13/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	inadequate
Recent changes in the children and young people living in the home and staff working there have not been effectively managed. This has impacted negatively on the stability of children's lives and their welfare. At times, this has put a strain on relationships, which in some instances they have broken down completely. Some children and young people have been involved in, or witnessed, violence and aggression towards staff and each other, as well as damage to the home. Staff have struggled to manage the situation. Consequently, the police have been called to support staff in managing challenging behaviours. Staff's inability to resolve conflict and promote positive relationships means children and young people are not living a consistently safe, stable and nurturing environment. Children and young people are not adequately supported by staff to recover from seeing or being involved in violent incidents. They openly voice their unhappiness about what is happening in the home. For example, in a recent house meeting staff explained that a young person had moved from the home, the response from the other young people was 'they didn't mind not saying goodbye as they are pleased he has been moved.' The reasons they gave for this were 'the house may start to feel less violent, loud and unsettled and there should be less disturbances particularly at night.' The staff did not take time to discuss these comments with them. In addition, a young person's key work records stated 'he wasn't bothered about goodbyes, he was glad he was gone as staff would stop getting hurt and the house would be quieter.' The records do not demonstrate that staff acknowledged these feelings or how children and young people are supported to explore the impact of others' behaviour on them, how to understand other children's feelings and think about how they can learn to get along better and be friends. Children and young people benefit from living in an environment where education is highly valued and promoted. They all have good attendance at school. Most of them go to the organisation's on-site school, and a young person has successfully moved to high school and is making new friends. One young person confirmed he is supported to complete his homework. Staff encourage children and young people to take part in positive activities and follow their interests in the local community. They enjoy playing rugby, going swimming, visiting the library, going to the park on their scooters, and some like to go and watch their favourite rugby team play. All children and young people's general health needs are met. They are registered	

with local health professionals. In addition, most of them engage in weekly therapy sessions with a clinician from the organisation's therapeutic team. However, a placing social worker commented that they have struggled to gain information about the progress of the therapy. This limits their ability to assess the impact of this support on the young person's emotional well-being.

The staff work positively to make sure children and young people see their families. A social worker said: 'staff arrange contact and his keyworker does have a good relationship with his dad.' This means that children and young people are supported to strengthen important relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
Children and young people safety and welfare is compromised by the home's poor safeguarding practices and a failure to follow child protection procedures. There is a clear lack of distinction between direct allegations against staff and children and young people's complaints. Therefore, allegations arising from staff practice are not always correctly identified. Furthermore, the provider could not produce records of internal investigations carried out to inform relevant personnel of the measures necessary to protect children and young people. It is not clear that children and young people are able to take their complaints further when they are not been satisfied with the conclusion. Children and young people are not confident that their concerns are dealt with properly to help them feel safer. On one occasion, a young person made a disclosure in relation to other children and young people in the home. Although this was reported to a senior manager, who was on-call, and the placing authority out of hours emergency duty teams, records are not available to demonstrate what measures were taken to safeguard the children and young people. The staff have struggled to effectively manage children and young people's feelings and challenging behaviour. The numbers of restraints have increased for some children and young people. However, restraint records do not provide a detailed enough account of each incident to enable the managers to fully evaluate that the restraint is appropriate and safely; or enable managers to respond effectively where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The records do not clearly show children and young people's behaviour, what steps staff used to try to de-escalate challenging situations and prevent the use of restraint. Furthermore, the quality of record keeping is poor. Written information is illegible, the signature of the author is unidentifiable, and descriptions of what happened are confusing and contain conflicting information. For example, a senior manager recorded	

'single elbow hold is not the appropriate hold', but then goes on to say 'all procedures and policies were followed.' Another record indicates that the same member of staff was involved in physically restraining two boys at the same time. Managers do not record that they have spoken to the children or young people after a physical intervention. The records fail to demonstrate that staff understand and are consistently and safely applying the behaviour management policy of the home. The lack of robust monitoring fails to protect children and young people and improve practice.

There has been an increase in children and young people going missing from the home. They do not always get appropriate support from staff when they are found, which has led to further concerns about their welfare. On one occasion, two young people were found by the police and taken back to the police station until staff could collect them. However, staff from the home informed them that there was not enough staff on duty to collect them. The young people were then arrested for causing criminal damage in the police station. On another occasion, two young people had been placed on police protection orders because they had been found in London and no-one was available from the home to collect them. They were placed with emergency foster carers overnight. Staff recognise that some young people influence others to go missing and have taken action to address this, such as taking individuals away for an extended summer holiday. However, the local police have raised their concerns with a senior manager and Ofsted about the high level of calls for assistance recently from staff and the lack of stability in the home.

There has been some recent damage caused to the home by children and young people. Their bicycles are being stored in the house because the shed was taken down to prevent them climbing on it. The deputy manager told the inspector that funds have been agreed to replace broken furniture. One of the upstairs bedrooms is used as a staff sleeping room but cannot be locked because there is a fire escape in the room, which requires access at all times. At the last inspection, it was evident that the children and young people were going into this room to use the fire escape to leaving the home without staff's knowledge. This is still happening. Senior managers said that they will talk to the local fire safety officer to try and find a solution to this problem.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
The Registered Manager has been in post since 2006; she has a wealth of experience in residential childcare and she is suitably qualified. However, she has been absent from work for a number of weeks and this has contributed to a lack of effective leadership and management oversight in the home. The challenging	

needs of some children and young people and new and inexperienced staff working in the home has resulted in the welfare and safety of children and young people being compromised.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to the group of children and young people living in the home. One young person struggled to settle and this has been disruptive for other young people. In addition, young people have not been cared for by a settled and consistent staff team. The staff rotas show that the staff team has continued to be in a state of flux since November 2014. The rota still relies on relief and new staff to maintain an appropriate staffing level. Several the new members of staff have little experience of working in a residential setting or the expertise to manage difficult behaviour. Both young people and staff said that they have found the changes stressful. The leaders and managers have failed to tackle these problems sufficiently to make the necessary improvements.

Although the new staff are inexperienced, they are enthusiastic, enjoy spending time with the children and starting to build some positive relationships with them. In recent weeks staff have received further training in safeguarding and missing from home to build up their knowledge and skills. However, further work and support are required to develop their competence in understanding the children and young people's needs, managing conflict and promoting better relationships.

There has been a lack of progress in the requirement and recommendations from the last inspection. Serious weaknesses remain in trying to reduce the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour, and in the quality of the written records. The lack of robust management oversight of staff practice and safeguarding concerns means the welfare and safety of children and young people is not being fully protected.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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