

SC020608

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 three children with a variety of complex needs.

The registered manager is experienced and is qualified to level 5 in health and social care management.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2023

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: 27 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2022	Full	Good
21/04/2021	Full	Good
08/10/2019	Full	Good
12/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were two children living at the home at the time of this inspection. Both have been at the home since the last inspection.

Children receive good individual care from staff who listen and engage with them. Children express their views through a variety of individual discussions with staff. As a result, the children have trusting relationships with those who care for them. This enables staff to help them explore topics that at times are difficult for them, for example, living alongside each other, engaging with education and participating in community-based social groups.

Staff consistently promote education. Both the children have education plans, which are regularly reviewed. When children are excluded from school, the managers and staff work closely with placing authorities and schools to support them to return as quickly as possible in a planned way. When children are on reduced timetables, staff support them to undertake schoolwork at home. One child is currently not engaging with most of the educational opportunities offered to him. However, staff continue to work in partnership with his school to encourage him to engage. When he recently completed exams, engaged in work experience and successfully applied for and started a job, staff celebrated his achievements.

Children are supported to pursue their hobbies. One child writes and records his own music, attends a music group, plays guitar and has also started drum lessons. He also attends an open mic evening once a week. Another child is a member of a football club, waiting to join a swimming club and enjoys going out on his scooter.

Children's wishes and feelings are listened to. For example, one child asked to clear the garage and create a practice space for his drums. This has been achieved and he proudly showed the inspector this space, which he has personalised. He has plans, with the registered manager, to develop it further.

Staff ensure that children maintain and develop relationships. When appropriate, they support with family time in the home, out in the community and at family events. They also encourage the children to spend time with friends. Children meet up with friends to play, for tea visits and for birthday parties.

Some areas in the home have been redecorated and refurbished. However, other areas of the home need attention, for example, one child's bedroom and the games room look tired and the garden was overgrown. The registered manager and responsible individual have improvement plans in place. Painting has been requested, repairs are ongoing and some new furniture is on order. The home is in the process of contracting a gardener. There is a date set to undertake some major renovation to the kitchen and utility room. The children will move out while the work is completed. This will also provide an opportunity for other work to be carried out.

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

Children become increasingly safe over time due to the good level of care they receive. Children do not go missing from this home. There have been no complaints made. There have been no concerns about exploitation or radicalisation. Low-level safeguarding concerns have been quickly addressed, with good management oversight ensuring appropriate procedures are followed.

Staff de-escalate children's behaviours well. They are aware of factors that children may struggle with and the actions they need to take to keep them safe. Recently, the registered manager has replaced the use of negative consequences with reflective learning. Staff are becoming skilled at recording any incidents that occur and the discussions that take place with the children as a result. This gives the registered manager good oversight and is enabling her to monitor children's learning from incidents.

Staff are tenacious at providing new opportunities when the children do not want to engage and in supporting the children when a situation has not been positive for them and helping them move forward. For example, one child is a member of a football club, however, due to his behaviours he has been asked not to attend the next couple of training sessions. Staff are sensitively using this as a learning opportunity while introducing him to strategies that will help him when he returns.

The registered manager ensures that staff who are recruited to work in the home are subject to all the necessary checks. This helps to ensure that staff who work at the home are safe to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A long-standing and qualified manager manages the home effectively. The staff team is consistent and most of the staff hold the expected qualification in residential care.

The registered manager and deputy know the children well. They are clear about the home's strengths and the areas they wish to develop. They successfully use internal and external auditing tools to ensure good staff practice and promote positive outcomes for the children.

All staff spoken to are positive about the level of support that the managers provide. Staff receive a range of training that ensures that they can support the individual needs of the children they care for. For example, the registered manager has recently ensured that all staff complete an advanced anti-bullying course. Staff knowledge and practice are further developed by the managers in supervision sessions and team meetings. These demonstrate that staff are supported to reflect on their practice and their understanding of the children they care for. All appraisals are up to date and staff have personal development plans in place. There is a new

appraisal process which includes holding mid-year reviews for staff. However, these have not yet been introduced.

The staff work in close partnership with the provider's psychological and therapeutic services and there is normally also a therapist linked to the home. This post has been vacant since February 2023 but has now been appointed to. This vacancy has meant that, for a short time, staff have been without the unique professional insight of a therapist that would normally inform their practice.

The manager works effectively in partnership with a range of professionals. External professionals are positive about the care and support that the children receive and the level of communication from the managers and staff. They see improvements in the behaviour and confidence of the children living at the home.

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— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii))	30 September 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. This specifically relates to ensuring staff and children are supported by the provider's clinical team while the therapist post linked to the home is vacant. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. As part of the performance management process,

poor performance should be addressed by a timely plan to bring about improvement. This specifically relates to completing mid-year reviews in line with the provider's process. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC020608

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Carser

Registered manager: Karla Dovey

Inspectors

Dawn Bennett, Social Care Inspector
Tara Weston, Social Care Inspector

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