

SC020611

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered for up to three children aged between eight and 17, who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The manager is suitably qualified and registered with Ofsted in March 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 03 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **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/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 18 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/09/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Good
21/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Not all children at this home are making progress.

Staff have created plans to support children's development and behaviours. However, for one child, staff have not been consistent in implementing those plans. Staff have been inconsistent in their response to the child's behaviours and have not always put in place boundaries. As a result, staff have not supported the child to learn from their behaviour and make more positive choices.

Staff have tried to build positive relationships with children living at the home. However, this has not been successful for one child, and the strategies used by staff to engage the child have failed. Staff have not been persistent in their approach or regularly reviewed their strategies to encourage the child to respond to their support. Instead, staff have allowed the child to use intimidation and threats to get their wishes met. As a result, staff have failed to support the child to progress in their behaviour and social development.

Staff help children to attend education, including paying for a child to attend an alternative education provision over the summer. One child enjoys school and has 100% attendance. She is doing well in school and making progress. However, another child is more reluctant to attend. The registered manager has not put in place plans which provide sufficient guidance to staff on how to manage the child's refusal to attend school or how staff should support the child's learning while they continue to refuse to attend education. As a result, the child's progress is impaired.

Staff ask children to give them ideas about activities they can participate in. One child rarely engages or participates in activities with others at the home, preferring his own company. The other child has taken up horse riding and begun attending cadets.

Staff have helped children to maintain and build positive relationships with their families. Staff make sure children are taken to visit family and friends. Staff have also worked with one child's family so that the child could go on a family holiday. This would not have been possible without staff remaining in the area for the duration of the holiday. Staff encourage children to keep in touch with family via technology in between visits and when face-to-face visits are not possible due to COVID-19. Consequently, children have maintained links with those who are important to them and continued to feel part of their family.

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

The registered manager has given notice to a child's placing authority as he no longer feels that the home can safeguard this child. The placing authority is

currently in the process of finding another placement. Although the manager has acknowledged that the child requires safeguarding, the child's risk assessment does not consider all the risks associated with the child and there is no clear plan to reduce the risk of harm. For example, the child often visits a den which has been built on a farmer's field near the home. This is close to a railway line and public footpath. There is no monitoring by staff when he is in the den to ensure that he is safe. Risk assessments have not considered the risks posed by the railway line or people who may visit the den. As a result, the child is at risk of significant harm from others and the railway line.

One child is known to smoke cannabis and there is no clear plan to support the child to reduce their cannabis use. The registered manager is unable to establish where the child obtains cannabis. Staff do not always know the child's whereabouts and he is able to leave the home without staff knowing. The child has sold belongings and received money from their parent, but staff are unaware of how the child has spent this money. Furthermore, there are no plans in place as to how staff can reduce opportunities for the child to obtain drugs. Consequently, one child continues to smoke cannabis with the continued risks to his health and well-being.

The registered manager had allowed one child's bedroom to deteriorate to such a point that it was not fit for purpose. Only when highlighted by the inspector did the registered manager take action to improve the child's living conditions. This has not helped the child to feel cared for and valued.

Strategies to support one child with their behaviour have been ineffective. The registered manager has not ensured that staff are consistent in their approach and that staff follow plans in place to manage this child's behaviours and keep them safe. Consequently, one child remains at significant risk to himself and others.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that staff provide consistent, safe care to one child. As a result, this child is at significant risk of harm. The registered manager has identified that the home is not the right place for this child and has served notice to the child's placing authority. However, leaders and managers have failed to take sufficient action to safeguard the child while a suitable placement is found. As a result, the child remains unsafe and is not making progress.

In contrast, the manager has ensured that the other child in placement is suitably and safely cared for. The manager and staff have taken the necessary action to ensure that the child receives the support they need to make good progress.

Training has been undertaken with staff, which has been mostly online due to COVID-19. Plans are in place to do face-to-face training, which will be of benefit to the staff team. However, managers have not made sure that all staff have completed the relevant qualification in timescale or undertaken training in bullying, complaints or substance misuse. These shortfalls mean staff do not have all the skills needed to care for children living at the home.

Managers have undertaken staff supervision in line with company policy, which gives staff an opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, staff say morale is low, which is hindering their ability to give consistent care to children.

In response to the widespread concerns identified at this inspection, Ofsted issued a notice restricting the accommodation on 04 November 2021.

Following this inspection, three compliance notices were issued under regulation 11 (the positive relationships standard), regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) and regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard).

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 understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that there are plans in place that inform staff on how to encourage children to attend education. In addition, that plans guide staff on how they will help children with informal learning on the days children refuse to attend.	12 December 2021
* 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 staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;	12 December 2021

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

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 to do the same;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and

have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and

that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))

In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff form positive, trusting relationships with children which supports their development in learning acceptable behaviours and in managing their own behaviours.	
* 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(d)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that children’s risks are fully assessed and plans are in place to reduce those risks. Also, that children’s bedrooms are kept clean and maintained to an acceptable standard.	12 December 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—	12 December 2021

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must monitor staff to ensure that that they work as a team. Also, managers must ensure that all staff receive training in substance misuse, complaints and bullying.	
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff complete the appropriate qualification within the specified time frame.	12 December 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC020611

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: Alexander Garvin

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2021