

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC024808
Inspector	Dawn Bennett
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Keys Education Limited
Registered person address	Hurstwood Court, Laganwood House New Hall Hey Road ROSSENDALE Lancashire BB4 6HR
Responsible individual	Marc Murphy
Registered manager	Darren Craig Oatley
Date of last inspection	21/01/2014

Inspection date	12/08/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Outcomes for young people are not consistent. Some young people make good progress. They attend school or college, take exams, gain employment and move successfully on into adulthood. Other young people make adequate progress. There is a reduction in historical high risk behaviours of drug abuse and going missing. They develop an improved understanding of dangers and risks. However, they still go missing and absent from the home and take drugs and legal highs.

The quality of care provided by the staff team is good. They work effectively with young people and build up very positive relationships. A social worker stated, 'the staff team have unconditional positive regard for young people. They always do everything in their power to provide positive opportunity and are never disillusioned by young people. As a result young people experience warm stable relationships with people who really care for them.' The staff promote positive interests and education focusing at all times on young people experiencing a successful transition on into adulthood.

Although the staff team manage very challenging behaviours at times, levels of consequences and physical interventions within the home are low. The staff team work at all times to promote the safety and well-being of young people while promoting their independence. Where young people choose not to engage with their

plans and go missing from the home, the staff team do all they can to ensure their safe return. They work well with partnership agencies to achieve this. However, agreed strategies are not written into young people's records, this means staff and young people are not safeguarded by working to agreed procedures.

The Registered Manager has built a proactive and enthusiastic staff team. However, staff are not being effectively supported through supervision; appraisal and training to best meet the needs of the young people placed at the home. As a result staff do not continue to develop their practice to best meet the needs of young people.

The Registered Manager and quality assurance processes ensure there is an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. The Registered manager and staff team continue to work to drive up standards and effectively address shortfalls.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to accommodate up to four young people of either gender. The service is owned by a private company. The purpose of the home is to offer young people a service which provides semi-independent living in a supported environment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
26/07/2013	Full	outstanding
22/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/10/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	the registered person shall prepare and implement as required a procedure to be followed when any child accommodated in a children's home is absent without permission which has regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children (Regulation 16 (4) (a))	31/08/2014
27 (2001)	the registered person shall ensure that all person's employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	31/08/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training needs keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home. This specifically relates to staff training in drug awareness and legal highs (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people know their targets and areas for development. For example, they attend regular key working sessions where they discuss their care plan or pathway plan or any recent incidents or important issues. As a result, young people know why they are living at the home and what they want to achieve in the future.

Some young people make good progress. They successfully complete their education. They gain employment. They access college courses and successfully move into their own accommodation.

Some young people make adequate progress. They have a history of going missing, which has reduced since moving into this home, but still occur. Some young people also have a history of taking drugs and legal highs. This behaviour has reduced with some young people engaging with specialist services. However, incidents still occur and are often linked to episodes of being absent or missing from the home. Young people are aware of the dangers as a result of their decisions and behaviours, however, they still choose to engage in behaviour that places them at risk.

Young people continue to make positive progress in developing their independence and readiness for adulthood. All young people follow plans for developing their life skills tailored to their age and ability. For example, some young people are on semi-independence plans while others are on full independence plans. These plans are regularly reviewed by young people and staff. As a result, young people understand the progress they are making and are prepared for making positive transitions to adulthood.

Young people access educational and training opportunities and maintain regular attendance. Some young people are also supported to successfully gain employment. This results in a home where young people are encouraged and supported to realise and achieve their aspirations and look to possibilities in the future.

Young people discuss their views, wishes and opinions in regular house meetings. A range of appropriate matters are discussed. Sometimes topics relate to young people developing their social skills and coping with communal living. These meetings are also used to consult with young people on the development of the home and service. Ideas and suggestions form the young people's own development plan. This helps them have a sense of ownership of their home and environment.

Young people's physical health is generally good although drug misuse is present. Young people are well supported to develop the skills required for them to book and attend their own health care appointments and take on increasing ownership of their health needs as they get older. This supports their independence.

Young people keep in touch with the people important to them. They also build new relationships in the local community through education, employment and interests. This ensures relationships are maintained and young people have a better understanding their backgrounds. It also means they increase their support network of friends for when they move out of the home on into adulthood.

Quality of care

good

Positive relationships exist between staff and young people. One young person said: 'All the staff are excellent. They go that extra mile.' The staff work hard to engage young people in understanding and influencing their future goals. They understand the link between positive relationships and influencing and improving young people's outcomes.

The staff team successfully introduce young people to, and promote their involvement in, new hobbies and interests such as cycling and fishing. They also support them to become active members of clubs and groups in the local community, for example, cadets and youth groups. These constructive activities help some young people to move away from high risk activities and results in them forming new positive long term friendships within the local community.

Complaints from young people are appropriately managed and resolved amicably. A clear complaints policy is freely available in the home. As a result, young people know that they are able to raise their concerns and that these are acted upon.

The staff team are skilled at supporting young people to develop the skills they require to move onto to adulthood. A social worker stated: 'We are very pleased with the service this home has provided. This is certainly not a straight forward case. There have been, and remain, a number of challenges. However, the focus of this placement has been to prepare the young person for living on his own and this has been successfully achieved.' The staff team ensure they provide a good balance between safeguarding a young person and enabling them to become increasingly more independent. Another social worker stated: 'I was concerned at first that the independence would be too much for the young person. However, the home has adapted the programme in a very supportive way. His goals have been challenging but achievable and this is improving his self-esteem.'

The house and its gardens are well maintained. Young people feel the home is 'homely ' and 'welcoming'. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. The Registered Manager and staff team work hard to ensure there is a home-from-home feeling and atmosphere that reflects the interests of the young people living there. The home's development plan highlights the actions the Registered Manager has in place to ensure the standard of the décor and furnishing is maintained.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Some young people's historical patterns of using drugs and going missing on a regular, and sometimes extended basis, have reduced. The staff use positive relationships and education to encourage young people to remain in touch, discuss issues, and return to the safety and comfort of the home. They work effectively in partnership with parents and placing authorities by looking at patterns of high risk behaviours and adjusting visits home and weekly routines to reduce risk. The staff team follow local protocols and attend strategy meetings where appropriate. They understand this behaviour impacts on every area of young people's lives and exposes them to serious risk of harm. Staff actively look for young people who are missing and support them to engage with other agencies.

Although these high risk incidents are not as regular or prolonged as they were historically, they do still occur. Some young people will make some progress, and then regress, before moving forwards again. Procedures have been agreed with partner agencies to safeguard young people during periods of increased high risk behaviours. Staff are clear of these procedures, however, they are not written into young people's plans and records. As a result, staff and young people are not being safeguarded by clearly recorded and agreed procedures that are regularly monitored by the Registered Manager and quality assurance processes.

Staff promote appropriate behaviour and discuss inappropriate behaviour and strategies for reducing it on a day-to-day basis and in key worker sessions. Consequences and restraint is rarely used in the home. Where it does occur, it is appropriately applied for the purposes of protecting young people from harm. All required details are recorded and young people are supported in discussing their views. Young people are encouraged to reflect and understand the impact that their behaviour has on others. This results in young people taking responsibility for their actions. A social worker stated, 'the young person has a much better understanding of the impact of his behaviour on his family. He is now thinking about his actions. He understands the affect he is having on others. He is now taking more responsibility for this. He is also setting and working towards his own targets.'

The staff provide young people with a safe environment. The home is well maintained and meets young people's needs. Health and safety checks are regularly carried out, for example, fire safety is regularly reviewed through fire drills and checks on equipment.

Leadership and management adequate

This home was judged to be outstanding at its last full inspection. It was then judged as making inadequate progress at the interim inspection. One requirement was made and has been met.

The Registered Manager has been in post at the home since January 2014. He has previous experience of working with young people in children's homes. He is qualified to level four and is currently working towards a level five qualification in leadership and management. The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and a development plan is in place. He has built a strong professional team of staff who work well together. They are proactive in covering any required shifts to ensure consistency of staff for young people.

The staff team feel listened to by the Registered Manager and are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the home as well as its long term development. Young people feel that the Registered Manager and staff team are a key strength of this service. Partnership agencies and young people's families also speak positively about the Registered Manager's and staff team's skills and flexibility. A parent stated, 'I have worked with a number of children's homes. I really like this one because they are open and honest. They communicate really well and don't hide things. They do everything they can and what they do, they do well.'

There are support structures in place for staff. However, over the last three months monthly supervisions have not been taking place for all staff. The Registered Manager has also not yet received an appraisal. As a result, staff are not being well supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a good quality service to young people

Staff have access to a professional development programme which covers induction as well as professional, mandatory and additional training. However, there is delay in accessing training for individuals and the staff team. For example, the home's deputy has been waiting to start his professional training for a number of months. The staff team are working with young people who at the point of placement were known to have a history of drug and legal high use. However, the Registered Manager has only just been able to access training for them. As a result, staff do not enhance their skills to keep them up to date with professional and legal developments or meet the needs of young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose is up to date and contains all required information. As a result, young people, parents, staff and placing authorities are clear about the home's aims and objectives. The home's development plan sets out the plans for the year. Staff are clear of the home's strategy and how targets will be achieved.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.