

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	16 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC024808
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 Oatley
Inspector	Louise Battersby

Inspection date	16 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC024808

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Young people are not constantly involved in updating their care plans.
- Not all young people have access to the specialised provision that they require.
- Staff do not encourage or support young people's relationships with each other.
- Staff do not ensure advocacy support is helping young people to have an independent voice.
- Staff do not routinely consider all aspects of a young person's risk assessment, especially when assessments are updated.
- The manager does not robustly challenge services to help young people make progress.
- Staff do not have the specialised training to help them to meet the needs of the young people.

The children's home strengths

- Young people make progress in their education.
- The manager and staff support and value young people's contact with family members and those important to them.
- Young people have strong relationships with staff.
- Most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are at present within regulatory timescales to obtain their qualification within two years of starting work.
- Managers recognise there are weaknesses in practice and are working hard to address them.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; (c) 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;	18 July 2016
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 ensure that children receive care from staff who— (2)(b) ensure that each child— (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support;	18 July 2016
11. The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— (2)(b) that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.	18 July 2016

12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure; (2)(a)(iv) that staff manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (b) that 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.	18 July 2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must— (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	18 July 2016
14. The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure— (1)(f) that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child	18 July 2016

Recommendations

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

- ensure when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered for four children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a large private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31 March 2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19 January 2016	Full	Requires improvement
12 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12 August 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Young people have limited understanding of their care plan. This leaves them without sufficient opportunity to express their views and to build their relationships with staff by talking about their plans. When young people have difficulties with substance and alcohol misuse, staff support them to access specialist services. However, some young people require a range of specialist healthcare provisions to meet their needs. Staff are not confident about working collaboratively with other services to ensure young people do not experience delays. This hinders the opportunity for the young people to develop emotional well-being. Young people have strong relationships with staff and talk positively about them. One young person commented, 'the staff here are really good and sound. You can have banter with them and they are supportive.' However, this is not reflected in peer relationships. When young people have difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships with peers, staff do not actively seek to aid the young person to develop these skills. This hinders the young people's chances of making and sustaining healthy relationships that address their social needs. Young people's meetings take place regularly. They are well attended, and the young people set the agenda and discuss important issues with staff. Staff listen and implement, where possible, the requests of the young people. However, although young people have access to advocates the manager and staff fail to take action to ensure young people continue to access the support of these services. This limits young people receiving all the necessary help and support they need to optimise their well-being. Staff support young people to access a range of activities. For example, they go to the cinema, the gym and paintballing. Staff ensure that young people are equipped with the skills, confidence and self-esteem to progress into independent living. This includes helping them to cooking and managing a budget. When young people are near to leaving, staff help them to find accommodation and keep in contact after they have left.	

The manager and staff support and value young people's contact with family and others important to them. This helps to ensure young people sustain meaningfully contact with people they view as important to them.

Young people make progress in their education. When, at times, young people struggle to attend, staff actively support them and liaise effectively with education providers. As a result, they are able to complete their courses and sit their exams. This gives them a positive option to continue in education, if they wish. One education provider commented, 'The communication from the home has been phenomenal.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
There are clear risk-management plans in place. However, staff do not routinely consider all aspects of a young person's risk assessment, especially when assessments require updating. This lack of consistency leaves young people vulnerable and does not enable staff to work with up-to-date information to keep young people safe. Young people's risk-taking behaviours such as missing, and putting themselves at risk of child sexual exploitation, have decreased from their starting points. When young people go missing, staff follow them and look for them. They complete key-worker sessions about safety and discuss reasons why they went missing. However, young people do not have independent return to care interviews. As a result, they do not have the opportunity to share any vital information with an independent person that could prevent further instances of going missing. Allegations against staff and complaints are reported to the correct professionals without delay. Staff recruitment is also robust. These both help to keep young people safe. Restraint records meet the required standards. The home successfully uses positive incentives to encourage desired behaviour and, as a result, physical restraint is not an everyday event. Behaviour is managed by staff and clear and consistent boundaries contribute to a feeling of well-being and security for young people.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
There is a registered manager in place. He holds his level 5 in leadership and management. He has been a registered manager since 2014, and was previously the deputy in the home. Most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are at present within regulatory timescales to obtain their qualification within two years of starting work. Managers and staff prioritise the needs of the young people. For example, after the recent admission, the home made a commitment to maintain an educational placement for the young person that is located at a considerable distance from the home, so that the schooling routine would not be disrupted. This helped the young person keep consistency and gave them the best opportunity to have their educational needs met. Staff talk positively about the support that they receive. Staff receive regular supervision in line with the home's supervision policy and there is a robust induction programme. Training programmes for staff cover many aspects of practice, including first aid and basic food hygiene. Many staff receive training that helps them to be aware of the risks associated with gang culture and child sexual exploitation. However, staff training is not always matched against the admission of young people. For example, for one young person it was identified that staff would require specialised training round ADHD, this was not completed. The home is achieving the aims and objectives outlined in the statement of purpose. The registered manager conducts regular monitoring of the service and an independent person visits the home monthly. The independent visitor's reports provides the registered manager with an overview of the home's operation. Managers recognise the weaknesses in the home and are working hard to change practice for the better. The home works closely with the local designated officer, social workers, and education. One social worker spoke positively about the home: 'I found the manager very communicative and helpful. The general care was good and staff had plenty of time to spend with the young people. There are very supportive.' However, the manager's challenge of other services is not always effective. Concerns are not consistently escalated to ensure that young people receive the services they require, for example return to care interviews and specialist health services.	

The home has undergone a number of improvements since the last inspection. This includes work to ensure that the home is well furnished and welcoming, ensuring that supervisions are carried out in line with the company policy and addressing computer security.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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