

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/01/2016
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	Christy Wannop

Inspection date	19/01/2016
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	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:

- Admission decisions are not always based on a robust assessment of young people's needs, because crucial care planning information and documents are not always obtained in time.
- The service has looked after young people whose needs it cannot meet, because critical information was not known. This includes young people who have needs above and beyond emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Inadequate placing authority information on young people, means that staff are not always able to deliver safe, well-informed care in accordance with relevant plans.
- Lack of information means that staff are unable to ensure that all young people get prescribed medication safely. Some young people's health needs and histories, including risks are unknown.
- The registered person has not always engaged with the placing authority thoroughly to secure documentation, or escalated concerns sufficiently.
- The review of the quality of care, while regular, is incomplete. The registered person has not consulted with parents, placing authorities or young people for their views.
- There is no evaluation in managerial review of placement success and whether the service has delivered against the aims of the placement or the statement of purpose for young people who have moved on.
- New staff do not have supervision at the company's expected frequency; they do not have sufficient support at the beginning of their career at the home.
- Children's records are not always unique or individual to them. Risk assessments omit crucial information.
- Internet safety controls are so tight, that young people are unable to access and take part in Ofsted's email annual consultation with them.
- The service is at a point of change. The registered person is introducing a new therapeutic model in the coming year. Young people with high level complex needs do not currently have the benefit of this.

The children's home strengths

- The well-organised manager is building a library of direct work resources for staff to enhance their one-to one sessions with young people.
- Support and respect for young people's religious beliefs is good.
- Staff try hard for the young people and empathise with their difficulties. They gather mementos and work hard to emphasise the positives in their lives in special individual books.
- There is a good level of nurturing for young people and staff are committed to non-institutional care.
- Child protection practice is sound. Associated professionals comment positively about the service. The service has worked well with local police to close 'legal high' stores: this make all young people in the area safer.
- Young people speak well of the manager and the home and particular trusted staff. The manager takes their views seriously and acts on their concerns.
- Staff have shown great resilience and are positive about their work.

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
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, to ensure children's needs are met in relation to obtaining comprehensive information about children, securing essential services, and ensuring independent return home interviews, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; (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.	31/03/2016
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, about proper and immediate access to any medication, specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required, the registered person must ensure: (1)(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met; (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; (2) (a) that staff help each child to— (i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; (c) that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.	31/03/2016
13: The leadership and management standard	31/03/2016

In order to meet the leadership and management standard, in respect of review of placement success and delivery against the aims of the placement and the statement of purpose, the registered person must- (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; (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; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard, in relation to informed admission decisions, risk assessments for self-harm, and Pathway Plans, the registered person must ensure that children— (1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, (2) (a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; (b) that arrangements are in place to— (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; (c) that each child's relevant plans are followed.	31/03/2016
The registered person must co-operate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the child's placement plan. (Regulation 17(1) (2))	31/03/2016
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31/03/2016
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child: are kept up to date; and are	31/03/2016

signed and dated by the author of each entry. In particular: A copy of any EHC plan or statement of special educational needs in relation to the child; a copy of any plan for the care of the child prepared by the child's placing authority, and of the placement plan, and about any health needs of the child. (Regulation 36, Schedule 3,(17) (19) (26))	
The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating: the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2) (a)(b)(c)(5)	31/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.5)
- Ensure appropriate forms of contact to relatives, friends, and Ofsted, is promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate, emails and texts; use of social media and other forms of contact via the internet. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 58, paragraph 11.18)
- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. Specifically, children's records, especially risk assessments, must be unique to them, detail clearly their risks, and not be 'cut and paste' documents that name other children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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. The home's statement of purpose describes long term care towards independence, semi-independent living accommodation for young people between 14 and 17 and outreach support for care leavers.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
21/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate progress
26/07/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Lack of knowledge about some young people's histories, health needs, medication, educational needs or abilities, family background and behavioural needs means that staff sometimes know very little about the young people they care for. Some young people lack full, or up-to-date, placing authority care planning documentation. Care planning in theory, includes an opportunity for young people to be involved and the plan is written 'in their voice'. In practice, staff sometimes write plans before young people arrive, based on minimal information and without consultation. Young people have waited too long for support with mental health issues. Poor placement planning has resulted in disruption in service between authorities and a lack of knowledge about previous provision. The registered person has not always got full information in the local authority plan about young people's health and medication needs. Young people have moved in with unmarked prescription medication and insufficient supplies and information about prescription drugs. Without the right information, a local GP has refused to register. Some young people have not had a health assessment for over a year. The service has cared from some very challenging young people, some for very short periods, others for longer. Progress has been mixed. Some young people have been removed by the courts; staff have been unable to manage some young people's violence towards them and others, because they were not fully aware of their history. For others, progress is slow, or inconsistent. Some young people have moved on home to families or into independence, but this is not a majority. Key planning documents to support young people into independence have sometimes been completely absent, for example a Pathway Plan for a young person leaving in three months. A strong focus on teaching and practising independence skills underlies staff approach with young people. Young people's complex emotional needs mean it is sometimes a very difficult task to achieve a balance. Daily routines focus on self-reliance, but staff do step in when young people are struggling to make wise decisions or take good care of themselves. Staff do not always set the pace of expectations about good daily routines, especially for those not in education. For example, young people rising late to a cooked brunch does not reinforce a message about being up and ready for a school day.	

Young people living far from home do not always get the support they need. In some extreme cases, staff may have little information about family backgrounds or situations and so are not able to make plans to support their contact, or promote their reintegration into their home community. A distant placing authority has recently failed to undertake a return home interview after a missing episode.

Support for education is a challenge. Staff do not always have even basic information about academic ability, or needs, in a proper plan. The manager does not monitor patterns in attendance, and without school information, is not able to establish easily whether attendance at school is improving or declining. An educational provider suggested that staff could more quickly report and communicate about lateness or absence. Staff have worked to support young people who have disengaged from education, to keep them occupied and on track. The organisation has ensured that every effort is rewarded and every achievement celebrated. Where young people are not succeeding academically, their learning about sexual health and independence skills is recognised through awards by the organisation's own education awarding body. The manager engages private tutors to work with young people who are not in education yet.

The rented house has had hard wear and tear this year. Young people have been instrumental in upgrading the décor and work is currently on going. Some young people's bedrooms lack personalisation, an empty bedroom is not yet fit for occupation. It is a large house, on three floors with young people and staff on the top two.

Relationships in the home are good. Young people say they can, 'have a laugh' with staff. They say they have staff they trust, and they are fair and kind, but also strict. Staff are caring; they try to fill the gaps in information and find out and are tenacious in ringing social workers. A drug recovery professional described the level of trust that one young person had, willing to share information from their sessions, with staff because of the positive relationships.

Good arrangements for activities and hobbies mean that young people get plenty of support to join and spend healthy time down at the gym with staff. Young people with musical skills, have musical instruments and staff enthusiastically support their talents. Staff encourage young people, to get along and there have been no reports of bullying.

Staff and managers see small steps of progress for young people. Some hold down regular 'Saturday' jobs, others are less at risk of criminalisation. They learn formal skills in food hygiene and fire safety and celebrate at school awards ceremonies.

Young people have plenty of opportunities to talk with staff about the important things. This happens in key working sessions, regular house meetings and during one-to-one activities. Staff prioritise quality time with young people. For example, quickly finding out about deeply-held faith and making sure that young people are

comfortable and have what they need to practice their religion sensitively. A local advocacy service are positive that young people are listened to and that staff help young people prepare well for statutory reviews. One young person said: 'It's a nice home, I am a lot more independent, I get trusted more here.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Scant information about some young people means that staff do not always have enough background information to confidently meet their complex emerging needs, including sexualised behaviour. Risk assessment plans are not sufficiently individual to each young person; they may not include all relevant information to help staff understand young people's history of anger and violence, or may be based on inadequate information. A 'pro forma' approach means that specific self-harm issues are not documented properly, and a previous young person's plan may be merely 'over written' leading to the wrong name and errors. Staff manage risks, where known, well in practice. Young people do go missing and staff and the manager are proactive in bringing them home as soon as possible. Staff work well to local protocols and are well trained. The police comment positively about staff's response. Where patterns in unsafe behaviour emerge, the manager makes safeguarding referrals, to ensure that interagency and cross local authority planning reduces risks, particularly where young people are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. Risks have been escalating lately. The manager has driven a coordinated safeguarding approach to focus on increasing risks while missing, following a current hospitalisation after a overdose, and a six-month local authority delay in providing psychological support. An active local authority child protection investigation is underway. Internet safety controls are so rigorous, young people are unable to use the email connection to Ofsted's annual survey. This is a barrier to their participation in a national consultation about the well-being of young people living in residential care. Behaviour management has been difficult, but overall is now good. The manager improved staff's skills in working with very challenging behaviour and about substance misuse. He has negotiated expert support for staff from within the wider organisation and also trained staff at a higher level in physical intervention and diffusing violence. The manager has taken action about staff who did not have the skills to work sensitively or calmly with young people. Restraint is safely used and monitored. One professional commented about staff's persistence and commitment shown to a young person: 'They have tried very hard for over a year. Have tried	

lots of strategies.’ Another was very positive about the management of risks for a young person in a court directed placement. ‘Although the placement was for a short period, staff endeavoured to prioritise his needs, including his education, employment and training, despite his strict supervision at the time he did enjoy his stay.’

Regular safety checks by staff ensure young people live in a safe environment. Staff are safely recruited. The manager takes young people’s allegations seriously and uses safeguarding and disciplinary processes where staff have proved unsuitable. The local authority safeguarding officer reports the manager’s willingness to engage and discuss safeguarding concerns, keen to discuss thresholds.

Young people have good conversations about keeping safe in their regular key working sessions. There has been proactive work about young people’s drug use, particularly ‘legal highs’ which are a particular risk in the locality. Staff focus on helping young people to be aware of risks from drinking alcohol and smoking. Young people seek staff advice and want to talk. An independent reviewing officer described how well the staff had sustained the placement of a, ‘hugely challenging’ young man: ‘they communicate well manage him appropriately.’

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered person has not always fulfilled their responsibility to actively support the plan for young people’s care, before admission, and at the point of placement. This approach to care planning and admission decision making does not prioritise young people. The home has accepted placements of young people who have autism and learning disabilities and whose behaviour presents a risk to staff and other young people. They do not always hold agreed placement plans where this is recorded. These shortfalls have had an impact on placement stability and the long term well-being of some young people who move out because their placements were not well made. The manager does challenge a lack of communication and documentation from placing authorities, but has not escalated this successfully through the responsible individual, or the placing authority management or the independent reviewing officer. This has also been identified through independent monthly monitoring. Staff contributions to reviews or in the monthly summaries, do not maximise the challenge to any placing authority about poor support, by identifying when essential documents are missing, or services delayed, such as return home	

interviews.

Managerial and independent monitoring gives the registered person a reasonable picture of the quality of care at the home. Some aspects of review reporting is repetitive between reports. However, consultation with stakeholders, parents and placing authorities is minimal and not well coordinated by the wider organisation as part of the formal review of the quality care, who took it out of the manager's hands over a year ago. The service has managed the admission of 13 young people and the departure of 10 since the last inspection. Managerial review lacks an evaluation of placement success, or endings, and whether the service is delivering against the specific aims of young people's placement, or the statement of purpose.

There has also been a turnover of staff. The manager is confident that he has the right team now, gaining experience and skills. Young people need individual staffing, so there are usually three staff on duty when all young people are at home and two staff sleep in at night. This is sufficient to meet their needs and prioritise individual care based on positive relationships.

Staff report a supportive manager, good training and satisfaction in team working. New staff do not get fortnightly professional supervision from their line manager, as required by the organisation. They work with challenging and complex young people and face significant challenges. Reduced frequency of one-to-one support and guidance from a skilled manager does not give them enough opportunity to share their concerns and develop their care and safeguarding practice.

The manager has been in post since June 2014, but was previously the deputy, so is well experienced in the company and in working with young people. He holds a level four qualification in management and is undertaking a further advanced qualification. He makes good relationships with young people and is keen to share his insight and resources with staff about creative, direct work to enhance young people's key working sessions.

Professionals associated with the service have commented positively on the persistence of staff and the trust young people have in the manager. They describe the warm welcome from staff and how the professional guidance given by the manager to staff supports good work with young people.

The ethos and working model of the service is set to change, to become more therapeutic in approach. Improved staff training has begun to shape skills towards that model.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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