

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC026991
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, Rawtensall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Karen Willson and Karen Forster

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged as requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Since the last inspection, the home has made positive progress. The manager, appointed in April, has introduced a more homely feel, with updates to the kitchen, bathroom and decor. Repairs are made immediately to encourage young people to value and enjoy their living environment. The manager has implemented 'Operation Sparkle', to involve the young people in making suggestions for events and improvements to the home, alongside weekly residents' meetings. She has identified and is acting on areas of improvement. Young people in the home are making progress. Education is valued highly. Young people's attendance is encouraged and expected and they all attend school or college. One young person now undertakes voluntary work for a charity and works at a local farm, which is open to the public. Staff speak with pride of about the progress that he has made in his social skills and commitment. They have advocated so that he receives additional support through college to achieve his potential. He is also developing his independence skills through the provider's own 'KIT' programme. The home ensured that another young person was enrolled into his new school immediately and in full-time attendance within two days of arrival at the home. Young people are encouraged to get involved in local clubs and activities where they are able to meet other young people in the area and to develop social networks. Young people are also encouraged to develop positive relationships with staff, and those who are able to spend time away from the home are clear that staff will check on their welfare. This encourages an understanding of being valued and cared for. One young person has left the home since the last inspection. Although it is the home's policy to have an extended transition period, the social worker had arranged a new placement with one week's notice. The young person chose not to engage in any visits prior to his move, but was supported by a member of staff who accompanied him to his new home. Two young people have since been admitted, one as an emergency. Pre-admission assessments were completed to consider the impact on and compatibility of young people. The manager is empowered to take only those young people whose needs she feels that the home can meet and who will mix well with others who already live there.	

Incidents of young people being missing from home have reduced. One young person was going missing when he first arrived at the home. A multi-agency approach to developing strategies and use of positive encouragement have resulted in there being no further episodes since August 2016. Updates to risk assessments following missing episodes are recommended, to reflect any increase in risk, particularly when young people have not gone missing previously.

Staff are kept informed by therapists of particular issues, which may impact on young people's behaviour, and any incidents are evaluated to inform understanding and practice. Regular and well-planned key work sessions are undertaken to help young people to understand their emotions and behaviour. Incentives are used and range from immediate rewards to longer-term goals to promote and recognise positive behaviour. Practice is supported by psychological oversight in the understanding of the experiences of young people, and the provider's model, 'Safe and Sound Care', is currently being rolled out to improve the quality of care.

Incidents do occur, which sometimes lead to the use of restraint. Clear guidance is given to staff regarding de-escalation techniques based on individual risk assessments, as well as on which restraint methods can be used, in line with Team Teach training. Records are clear and are overseen by the manager to ensure that restraint is necessary and proportionate to keep young people and others safe.

There have been improvements in the home's partnership working with other agencies to secure outcomes for young people. Concerns are escalated, when necessary, to ensure that appropriate action is taken. This included the initiating of risk management meetings for a young person who was regularly missing and at increasing risk. Staff and young people communicate regularly with social workers. The home needs to continue to develop relationships with professionals, including independent reviewing officers, particularly for young people who are new to the home, in order to streamline consultations before reviews.

Staff are positive about changes introduced by the manager since her arrival. They are enthusiastic and feel united in working together to ensure consistency in the care of young people. The team is led by a manager and deputy who are committed and value ongoing development. Training undertaken has been relevant to the needs of particular individuals, and staff feel that they have greater understanding and confidence in their skills to improve experiences for young people. Staff feel supported to develop professionally and they support each other to promote a happy home where they enjoy working, recognising the positive impact that this has on young people. They have recently repeated a staff survey, which demonstrates improved morale and a greater collective ownership to making further improvements to the experiences of the young people in their care.

The manager has addressed the requirements and recommendations made at the full inspection. She takes action to respond to recommendations made by external monitoring, and uses internal monitoring to analyse and gain awareness of patterns, in order to take action to mitigate these and to make improvements. Further improvement to internal monitoring is recommended, in order to clarify the active and ongoing input of other agencies, such as the Child and Adolescent

Mental Health Service (CAMHS), and the impact of the same.

The manager has undertaken her fit person's assessment and has been recommended to be registered, pending references. This will provide continuing stability to the home. Training and embedding training into practice are identified by the manager as ongoing priorities. This is to ensure that young people receive a high standard of care, which keeps them safe, promotes their welfare and supports them to continue to make positive progress.

Information about this children's home

The home is run and managed by an established private provider. It is registered to provide care and support for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
10/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement
15/07/2015	Full	Inadequate
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that evaluation of missing incidents is undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care and ensure that assessed risk levels are appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- Ensure that there is oversight of the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with professionals involved, in order to identify those services that are consistently and actively involved in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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