

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	15/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC026991
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered person address	Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, New Hall Hey Road, ROSSENDALE, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Michelle Lammin
Inspector	Denise Jolly

Inspection date	15/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	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 their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC026991

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young people's needs are not being met across all aspects of their welfare and development, in particular their safety and emotional well-being.
- Young people do not receive the level of care stated in the home's statement of purpose with regard to therapeutic and psychological interventions.
- Staffing is not sufficiently stable to provide consistent care to young people.
- Young people's risk assessments are poor. They do not promote their safety and welfare by adequately identifying relevant risks, such as violent and bullying behaviour; nor is there effective action taken to reduce and eliminate them.
- Young people are at serious risk of harm and criminal exploitation from being missing from the home.
- Care planning does not lead to improved outcomes for all young people.
- The home is not organised and maintained to provide a continuously safe and homely environment.
- There is ineffective management oversight of staff practice to promote good standards of care and to identify the weaknesses.
- There is insufficient management review and evaluation of all records and events in the home to understand how staff can better support young people's progress and experiences. Particularly with regard to how positive relationships are nurtured, and unsafe behaviour is addressed.
- Staff are not sufficiently qualified, skilled or competent to meet the needs of young people.

The children's home strengths

- Placing authority social workers and a parent confirm there is good communication between them and the home.
- Young people benefit from staff support that encourages positive contact with family members and those significant in their lives.
- Young people benefit from staff enthusiasm to find and promote age appropriate community activity that reflects their diverse interests and skills.
- Young people have access to the organisation's therapeutic professionals and programmes of support.

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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet quality and purpose of care standard the registered provider must – (2)(b) ensure staff – (i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; (ii) protect and promote each child's welfare; (iii) treat each child with dignity and respect; (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; (v) help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; (c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child; and (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. In particular supports each child to fulfil their potential; helping them to stay safe, learn positive social and independence skills; and live in a supportive and well maintained home.	14/08/2015
11: The positive relationships standard	14/08/2015

In order to meet the quality standard the provider must ensure (2)(a) that staff (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (v) 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; (vi) 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; (viii) strive to gain each child's respect and trust; (xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; (xii) understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and (xiii) have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and (b) that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. In particular, help children to understand the impact of their behaviour upon their own and other's safety and well-being.	
12: The protection of children standard. In order to meet the protection of children standard the provider must (a) that staff— (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into	14/08/2015

account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (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; (d) 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. In particular ensure staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, specifically with regard to addressing concerns of children being missing from the home.,	
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the provider 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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;	14/08/2015

(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and (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 the provider must ensure- (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.	14/08/2015
The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1))	14/08/2015
The registered person must ensure that all incidents of physical restraint are sufficiently reviewed, to include discussions with all staff imposing the restriction, and the child involved, so that their experiences can be taken into account and used to improve care practice. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(c))	14/08/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/07/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
31/01/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory progress
20/09/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	inadequate
Young people make limited progress in key areas of their lives due to serious weaknesses impacting negatively on their welfare and safety. Staff struggle to build and maintain positive relationships with young people. Instability in the staff team has disrupted the continuity of care provided. One young person has become anxious about the lack of a consistent approach, and has reverted to previous behaviour of exerting inappropriate control and violent behaviour. Young people relate inappropriately to each other by colluding in damage to the home and disregard for acceptable boundaries. In response staff have removed items from the kitchen and lounge limiting young people's independent access to food and communal pastimes, such as television or craft materials. Young people express ambivalence about living in the home. When young people engage in or observe disruption in the home, they demonstrate upset and anxiety by asking to move from the home and complaining about staff. Staff always follow up their immediate concerns, but do not work with young people to help them understand how to make and sustain positive change. This results in cycles and patterns of anxiety, disruption, violence and damage that undermine the positive work that staff are achieving. This does not create a nurturing environment where all young people are enabled to thrive and develop and build a sense of belonging and warmth. Staff promote the importance of education, and help young people to achieve continuity in their school placement. For one, this means that staff transport them some distance to ensure he continues to attend a familiar and appropriate school to meet his learning needs. Another young person has made progress in his studies and is enrolled to attend a college placement after the summer. Another young person was successfully encouraged to attend school immediately following his arrival in the home. This progress has not been maintained, due to the level of his unauthorised absence from the home and resistance to staff guidance when he is present. Staff are unable to support the emotional and psychological health of young people because they lack the knowledge and training necessary to promote young people's engagement in making positive change. All young people are offered support from the organisation's therapy team, and some regularly attend sessions to as part of their care plan. Others are at the beginning of an assessment of their	

needs. Only a minority of staff have an understanding of the therapeutic approach used, and there is no consistency in the way staff support young people. This has resulted in lack of progress for one young person in the key area of interpersonal relationships. His social worker and some staff expressed concern that this lack of progress would seriously limit his capacity to enjoy a successful adult life.

One young person is very clear that he does not want to live in the home. Staff have been unable to help him to come to terms with the reasons he is living away from his family. They have been unable to build sufficiently positive relationships with him, to encourage him to cooperate with his plans. Staff have been unable to address his needs regarding safety and emotional health because he has been missing from the home with increasing frequency. He said, 'I don't care about here, I want to be at home, and I will do what I want.' This places him at increasing risk of harm, criminalisation and poor mental health.

Some young people take advantage of the considerable efforts staff make, and engage in community-based activities that they enjoy. One young person has demonstrated progress in his social skills by participating regularly in a local army cadet group, and is going on holiday with them over the summer. Staff were working hard to identify an appropriate football activity for another young person, to encourage him to spend more time in age appropriate and constructive activity. Staff respond well to requests from young people to get equipment they need for model making or share cooking opportunities. However, young people do not always respond positively to staff willingness to help, and outings can become challenging situations when young people engage in offensive behaviour and refuse to stay with staff.

Staff promote and support family contact for young people when it is appropriate to do so. One parent said, 'The staff have been brilliant, my relationship with my son has improved a lot since he came to live at the home.' Staff advocate for young people. They organise complicated arrangements with multiple carers to help them stay in touch with brothers and sisters. They challenge social work professionals to gather clear information about the whereabouts of family. This improves young people's sense of identity and belonging, and supports their emotional well-being.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
Young people's welfare and safety are being compromised due to poor safeguarding practice. Managers have offered placements to young people without	

identifying, evaluating and addressing the full range of their needs and the impact arising from their arrival in the home. Impact risk assessments are completed after a placement has been offered, leaving a shortfall in staffing complement, and staff knowledge and understanding in areas such as learning disability and gang culture that the home has not yet rectified. The home has not overseen or analysed the impact of unstable and unsuitable relationships arising from new young people and changing staff faces. This has resulted in backward steps for young people who had previously made progress in reducing dominant and violent behaviour.

One young person recently admitted to the home has a learning disability. Because staff are not trained to support his poor social understanding and shortfalls in his communication skills, he has been subject to bullying and unhappiness. In his efforts to be friends with other young people, he has tolerated physical and verbal insult, violence and threat. Staff intervene to protect him, but they say that they feel inadequate to the task because they do not understand how best to support him. Staff have not systematically addressed the issue of bullying with either the victim or perpetrator, and this leaves the victim at risk of further harm.

Another young person was placed far from his family due to previous episodes of being missing and being at risk of unsuitable relationships. Strategies initially created to promote a reduction in this behaviour have proved ineffective, and he has escalated this pattern to include being missing overnight. The manager had failed to analyse and evaluate these episodes to increase his safety. His risk management plan has not been updated to take account of emerging information. As a result, he has made unsuitable friendships and relationships in the local area that continue to place him at risk of harm and criminal exploitation. A senior management review into the conduct of the home prior to and following his absence, led to an action plan to improve staff vigilance regarding his whereabouts. This action plan was not implemented, leading to further episodes of absence and further entrenchment of his behaviour. Although the manager called a strategy meeting to discuss her concerns, she failed to prepare information to support effective multidisciplinary planning. The police missing from home coordinator voiced concerns about the outcomes of that meeting due to a lack of clear direction to improve his safety.

The inspector observed poor relationships between staff and young people throughout the inspection. This was manifest by young people's low-level but persistently uncooperative and demanding behaviour, and insufficient challenge and redirection for young people from staff. Young people made comments such as, 'I make the rules here, not staff', and 'I will do whatever I want'. This meant staff made little impact on their behaviour, such as using a football indoors,

damage to the home, inappropriate language and other anti-social behaviour. One young person told the inspector that he liked the home when the others were friends with him, but hated all the noise and arguments with staff. Senior staff focused on the most challenging incidents and events, leaving new or inexperienced staff to respond to the needs of others. This had created an escalation in violence and aggression from a young person who experienced great anxiety arising from disruption and change. Staff had increased the use of restraint, further damaging relationships in the home, and on occasion had resorted to using the police to manage the young people's behaviour. Young people had become criminalised, and had spent time in police custody. This reduced their sense of confidence in staff to keep them safe and the security of the home.

Young people lived in a home that was not secure, and in some parts, unhygienic. The inspector discussed these shortfalls with senior managers during the inspection, and they agreed that such shortfalls should be rectified as a matter of urgency. They took immediate steps to improve the safety and welfare of young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
Young people live in a home that is not effectively managed. The home does not meet the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose because staff do not have sufficient skills, experience and qualifications to create a safe, therapeutic environment, or practice a model of psychologically led care and education. There are failures in senior management oversight and monitoring of the home to identify weaknesses and to take decisive action to correct these. As a result, young people's progress and safety have been compromised. The manager has been in post since January 2015. She is experienced and qualified to Level 3 in childcare. She is undertaking a level 5 leadership and management qualification. She has applied to be registered but the application has been delayed due to insufficient information being provided to Ofsted. The range of shortfalls identified by this inspection raises significant concern about the quality of leadership of the home. This is evident in the lack of progress made against the	

recommendations made during the last inspection. These related to improving the quality of records through improved monitoring and evaluation, and the upkeep of the accommodation. The inspector found significant shortfalls in these areas.

The home does not demonstrate how outcomes for all young people have improved over time. Although placing social workers and a parent confirm good levels of communication between them and the home, police and some social work professionals voiced concern about the ability of the home to support the safety or progress of some young people. The independent visitor has been recently appointed to the home and is beginning to visit to get to know staff and young people to better understand their views, as required at the last inspection.

There are three senior residential staff who have worked in the home for some time. Although one of them is usually on shift, staff do not provide continuity of care to children because of a mix of full time permanent, temporary relief and ad-hoc agency staff that was necessary to fulfil the obligations of the rota. The majority of the team is unqualified and there are vacancies to bring the team to full complement. Agency staff undertake direct work with young people following a brief introduction to their care plans. This does not equip them with the necessary knowledge and understanding to support young people effectively. This creates delay in their needs being met when agency or relief staff work alone with them. The manager's record of staff training demonstrated that a minority of staff are trained in appropriate therapeutic and psychological approaches that underpin the stated ethos of the home. This limits the effectiveness of the team to provide consistent, knowledgeable and dynamic care that improves children's lives.

Permanent staff participate in regular supervision, which they say is helpful to them for raising issues and concerns. However, records showed that little action was taken to address concerns about the suitability of some placements, staff training needs or the consistency of staffing. Communication between the home and senior managers was insufficient to monitor the views and experiences of staff, leading to reactive rather than proactive measures in managing the conduct of the home. For example, a support manager had visited the home to help the manager to overcome a backlog of children's records review. Her review of records of restraint did not include discussions with young people or all staff involved, and this limited staff opportunity to reflect upon their actions.

The manager had limited understanding of the inaccurate analysis of incident and missing from home records, out of date risk assessments, and incomplete monthly children's progress summaries identified by the inspector, because there had been no structured feedback from the support manager about her findings.

Consequently, the manager's own monitoring of the home presented a more positive picture than was accurate. This seriously diminished the capacity of the home to take positive steps to rectify matters, resulted in persistent bullying of one child by another, increased absence from the home and escalating levels of violence and disruption in the home.

While managers seek to recruit suitable staff, there was no plan to identify or address the impact on young people of changing staff faces and subsequent disruption to relationships. Outcomes for young people have deteriorated in key areas of their lives. Managers and staff express concern for this decline, but had failed to discuss issues constructively within staff meetings or with young people. Key workers had failed to update care planning records to provide clear guidance to staff. This inhibited consistent care practice because staff responded to the needs of young people from a reactive rather than planned perspective. Young people lacked clear guidance and expectation to help their lives to improve. At present, the home does not demonstrate a capacity for continued improvement.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children 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 4234, 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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015