

SC026991

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company. It provides care for up to four children, aged between five and 18 years of age, who may experience social or emotional difficulties. The provider uses a psychologically informed model of care.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

Three children are currently living at the home. They were spoken to as part of the inspection.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 25 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 22 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Four compliance notices were served following an initial monitoring visit on 11 August 2020 in response to a complaint received by Ofsted. The notices were deemed to be met at a further monitoring visit on 16 September 2020.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2019	Full	Good
16/10/2018	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/04/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children currently living in the home say they are happy. They are making positive progress from their starting points. Professionals are positive about the care that the staff provide. One child said, 'The staff help me in every way.' Children enjoy warm relationships with the nurturing staff team.

Current children are in full-time education. There is good communication with school staff to ensure that children receive the support that they need to achieve. However, despite the efforts of the staff to overcome barriers to learning, children previously living at the home did not make sustained positive progress at school or in home-based education. This potentially limits their future opportunities.

The staff help children to become healthier. They provide opportunities for children to take part in fun physical activities. The staff prepare nutritious home-cooked meals and encourage children to broaden their diet to include more vegetables. However, children's health plans do not include important information which would support planning for their health needs.

Children access specialist support for their emotional well-being at school, from the children and adolescent mental health team or from the provider's clinical team. The team provides children with nurturing care in the home.

The provider uses a psychologically informed approach to therapeutic care. Clinical reviews of children's progress take place at regular intervals. However, the reports lack evaluation of the tracked progress and do not provide future goals to guide practice in the home, in line with the statement of purpose.

The staff respond to children's individual cultural needs. The staff make sure that children maintain important links to their local areas, by helping them to attend familiar groups and clubs. Children are supported to see the important people in their lives such as their families and friends.

Some children do not have up-to-date local authority plans on file to inform care planning in the home. Children moving into, or out of, the home do not have robust child-focused plans to support them through this transition. This reduces the opportunity for children's views to be captured and to show how the staff help them through this significant change in their lives.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. The staff follow procedures if children go missing from the home. Independent return home interviews are arranged for children.

In general, children respect the rules and boundaries in place to keep them safe. The staff reward children's positive behaviour with praise and 'lucky dip' surprises. Sanctions are not frequently used; however, where necessary, the manager will overrule if the sanction is not proportionate to the circumstances. Records about children's behaviour often include verbatim reports of what children said during an incident. This is not helpful to children who may read their records in the future.

If physical intervention is required to manage children's behaviour, the staff complete records according to the regulation. The manager identifies practice improvements to reduce the need for restraint.

A child moved to the home sooner than originally planned. The registered manager reports that other children were afraid due to the child's behaviours in the home. The manager took swift action to review and end the child's placement to keep all children and staff safe.

The staff monitor relationships between the children. If children are unkind to one another, the staff address this with children individually in pieces of direct work. Positive relationships are also discussed more generally in children's meetings.

Children understand how to complain. The manager explains any complaint outcome so that children feel listened to and are satisfied with the response. However, a child complained that they did not feel safe because relatives worked on the same shift, which the rota confirms. Although other staff were present in the home, it is unclear how the child was reassured that this would not reoccur.

Ofsted has not been notified of all allegations made by children against members of staff. This means the regulator does not have effective oversight of the actions that the manager and staff take to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has reviewed and identified lessons learned from the premature ending of a placement to improve pre-admission planning. Although the home can admit children in an emergency, the manager has decided that all placements should be planned with a robust transition in place.

The manager is now involved in interviewing new staff to ensure that they complement the current team and understand their role, to improve team stability for children. New staff have an identified a 'buddy' in addition to the support embedded in the induction process.

The staff have completed mandatory and specific training to support children's individual needs. Face-to-face training is arranged to enhance online training completed during periods of restriction due to COVID-19. The staff are qualified, or are enrolled onto a suitable childcare qualification on completion of their probationary period. The manager has introduced research-based learning sessions for the members of the team to broaden their skills and knowledge base.

The manager and staff are not aware of the local offer, setting out the support available for children with special educational needs or disabilities. This is a missed opportunity to access additional resources for children.

The staff receive regular supervision. The manager has introduced a new format to improve the focus on reflective practice. The staff discuss children's requests and views in their team meetings. The staff say they feel well supported by leaders in the home and feel that the consistency and bonds within the team have strengthened over time.

Management oversight systems in the home are in place. The manager has a good understanding of children's progress and of practice in the home. She identifies areas of practice strength and development within her review of the quality of care. The report includes the views of external stakeholders. However, it would benefit from including children's views about their care.

There is a substantial delay in Ofsted receiving external monitoring reports. Children's progress and experiences are not always fully evaluated to enable the regulator to have effective oversight of practice in the home.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— 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; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)(c)) This specifically relates to children's current relevant plans being obtained to inform care planning for children living in the home, and ensuring that child-focused transition plans are in place for children arriving at or leaving the home.	1 May 2022
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (5)) In particular, that the reviews of children's progress within the psychologically informed model provide evaluation and guidance for the staff in care planning to meet the statement of purpose.	1 May 2022

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the independent person providing evaluation of children's progress and ensuring that reports are sent to the regulator promptly.	1 May 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	1 May 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's health plans include details, including their immunisations, and strengths and difficulties questionnaire scores as recorded in their health assessments, to inform their well-being needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff use language in children's records that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the location report for the home includes details of the opportunities available from the local offer for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the report on the quality of care includes children's views about the care that they receive. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation,

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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC026991

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor Queensway,
Halesowen B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Mark Dickinson

Registered manager: Wendy Birtwistle

Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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