

# SC066469

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager was registered in November 2016.

### Inspection dates: 3 to 4 March 2020

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 19 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 19/02/2019      | Full            | Good                    |
| 07/06/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 30/01/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 12/07/2016      | Full            | Good                    |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children living in this home receive good care and support from staff. The pre-admission processes consider the impact on all children to ensure that the home provides care and support as set out in its statement of purpose. Children benefit from individualised care. This helps them to settle quickly and supports good progress from their admission point.

Children enjoy spending quality time with staff. They engage in a range of activities, including cookery, snooker, outdoor activities and much more. Mealtimes are relaxing and provide opportunities for children to sit with staff and reflect on their day or talk about topics of interest. This provides positive messages to children that they are valued and helps them to develop trusting relationships. A child commented: 'I like everyone here. I have been made to feel very welcome. I would be happy to live here until I am older.'

Children are provided with opportunities to contribute to their care arrangements through choosing food and activities, personalising individualised spaces and discussing any other specialist care that they may require. Staff keep children informed of any changes or updates to their care-planning arrangements. This helps children to feel less anxious about how and who will provide them with care and support. Furthermore, the home has seen a reduction in critical incidents because the children feel reassured.

Staff are aspirational for children. There is a good ethos to both education and promoting good health. Staff work well with a range of external and internal professionals to provide consistent care and support. Children who arrive with no identified educational placement are appropriately supported. The staff work hard to maintain structure, and they arrange alternative educational activities that children engage with. This supports good transitions into formal education settings and helps children to maintain routine and continue their learning.

Friends and family time are especially well supported, where appropriate, regardless of the geographic location or logistics around the arrangements. Staff are dedicated to ensuring that children spend quality time with people significant to them. This helps children to maintain those relationships and provides them with positive experiences.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Risk management processes are good. Staff have received the appropriate training to identify and respond to risks. This helps to protect children better. Where there have been concerns around exploitation, the manager and her team have worked well with a range of professionals and agencies to ensure that children are helped and protected. Children feel safer as a result.

Up-to-date risk assessments and care plans are detailed and individualised. They provide instructions to staff on how to de-escalate behaviours that are known to be

effective for each child. Over time, the need for physical intervention has significantly reduced in the home. Good behaviour management helps children to better regulate their emotions and behaviour when they experience crisis episodes.

Children's health needs are well supported. Where children have additional health needs, carers seek out additional research and learning to ensure that they understand the needs of each child. This ensures that children receive appropriate support and care to manage their conditions. This helps children to place their trust in staff and ensures that good health regimes are maintained.

The use of negative sanctions is rare. The examples seen reflect that they have been used as a measure to safeguard children. Carers prefer to use praise and reward. The incentives offered have been effective and assisted in children achieving positive outcomes. This helps children to feel proud of their achievements and the progress that they make.

There are no concerns around 'missing' episodes for those children currently living in the home. There were 'missing' episodes relating to two young people who have since moved on. Carers follow the appropriate protocols to aid the safe return of children and young people when they go missing from home.

Children can talk to someone independent of the home on their return. The date of those interviews is recorded, yet no details from feedback are documented. Doing so would both demonstrate learning and track any patterns of behaviour to help to prevent future incidents.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager was registered in November 2016. She is supported in her role by a staff team with varying skills and experience. This means that children receive good care and support from a competent and skilled staff team. The manager is very ambitious for the children. Her staff team is equally driven to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, which supports good progress.

The manager and her team maintain very good working relationships with internal and external support services. She plays a significant role in the care team of professionals supporting children. She challenges other agencies where there are shortfalls in the quality of care provided to children. Children benefit from her input, as they access the appropriate support when needed.

The manager ensures that her staff team has appropriate training and regular supervisions to reflect on practice. She supports the development of her staff team. This means that children receive support from a capable and motivated staff team. Children trust that staff will act in their best interests and feel reassured, as a result.

In the main, records in documents reflect the proactive ways that children are supported by staff. The inspector found some records that seem ambiguous. Some handwritten records are difficult to read, making it unclear to children how they will be

supported by staff. The recommendation made at the last inspection remains an area for improvement, at this inspection. Additionally, some documents are not signed and dated by the author, which does not demonstrate accountability.

Most key documents are held on children's files and they support care arrangements. However, there has been a delay in the manager accessing some key documents from placing authorities. She states that she has requested the necessary documents, but there is no system for recording or monitoring this. This means that there is no process in place to trigger escalation, which could lead to delays. There has been no negative affect on children, but this may mean that their needs are not fully understood.

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

## Recommendations

- 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)

In particular, when return-home interviews are conducted by an independent person, any outcomes from those visits are explicitly referenced in order to demonstrate any learning that will support children to be better protected.

- The registered person is responsible for leading a team which provides high quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraphs 10.4)

In particular, ensure that the manager has a recording system in place to show the steps in obtaining key documents that support and inform the quality of the care provided to children

- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of his or her death. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.3)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4)

In particular, children's records should be made clearly to help the children to see how they are being supported by staff. In addition, documents such as the home's log book should not contain the full names of the children.

## **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:** SC066469

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** c/o Pinsent Masons LLP, The Soloist Building, 1 Lanyon Place, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT1 3LP

**Responsible individual:** Mark Ullah

**Registered manager:** Zoe Machen

## Inspector

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector



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