

SC362094

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered for up to two children, aged eight to 17, who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The home is managed by a suitably experienced and qualified manager who was registered with Ofsted on 25 February 2019.

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.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 29 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2020	Full	Good
18/09/2018	Full	Good
29/11/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive excellent care from an experienced and committed staff team. Staff are passionate about providing the best possible care in a nurturing environment. Consequently, children have made exceptional progress in all areas of their lives. For one child, their progress means that their placing authority is planning for them to move to foster care.

Staff develop plans for children which are individualised and based on a sound knowledge of the children. Staff make sure information from other sources, such as children's education providers and psychologists, is incorporated into their plans. This ensures that children receive consistent care and that all professionals are working towards the same goals.

When staff are concerned about a child's health and development, they advocate for assessments to be completed. Staff use training and research well to ensure that plans meet children's needs. For example, staff have made changes to a child's plan, so they have a set routine for the school day. This has meant that the child is less anxious, knows what is expected and is regularly ready to leave for school on time and in the right frame of mind.

Staff understand the importance of education. For children who are not in school, staff help them with educational activities and online resources while an educational provision is sought. This helps prepare children well to return to school. As a result of this work and carefully planned transitions, children attend education, progress well and are motivated to work hard and achieve.

Staff ensure that children have opportunities to engage with others away from the home. Staff have introduced children to a variety of activities to see what they like. As a result, children now attend train club, trampoline club and swimming club. This helps to improve children's confidence and self-esteem and to learn skills to cope in situations which cause them anxiety.

Staff encourage children to follow new interests and hobbies, along with implementing a consistent structure to the day. This approach successfully helped a child to reduce their time playing video games and to engage well in many other activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been times when children have had to spend more time in the home. Staff have been creative in providing activities and purchased additional toys and games. During one particularly challenging time, when children and staff at the home had COVID-19, some staff remained at the home for several days so that the children received care and consistency from staff they knew well. As a result, children coped well and had fun despite being unwell.

Children say they like living at the home, that staff are fun, and they care about them. One child referred to the home as their '[name of children's home] family'.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Staff know the children extremely well and have an in-depth understanding of their needs and risks. Staff implement thorough risk assessments and regularly review these to ensure that they remain current. As a result, children receive continuity of care that helps to keep them safe.

Staff work as a team and communicate well together to ensure that children receive a consistent response. Staff are adept at recognising children's triggers and emerging behaviours and are highly skilled at defusing potential incidents before they escalate or become challenging. Consequently, the number of incidents has significantly decreased, along with their intensity and duration.

Staff help children to understand risks so that they are better able to keep themselves safe. Staff have used online resources to help children understand that their bodies are their own, and the risks to children when online. Staff have been creative in encouraging conversations with children about different risks, such as having discussions after watching television programmes, especially soaps. This has created a culture of open discussions where children will talk to those caring for them about their worries and concerns.

Children have opportunities to spend time with professionals who are not their carers. One child has a mentor who he has known for a couple of years. They go out on activities and have fun. During these sessions, the worker creates opportunities to explore worries and past experiences for the child. Consequently, children have trust in others to express their concerns.

Staff undertake research to develop their understanding of behaviours such as bullying. Staff help children to understand that some people bully others due to their beliefs and prejudices. They work with children to show them that the differences in people's identities are valued. As a result, children's confidence and understanding grow.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is an exceptionally child-focused practitioner. She is inspirational, leads by example and has high expectations of herself and the staff team. The manager is aspirational about the care given to the children and helping them to achieve their full potential.

The manager is not afraid to challenge others. She has helped a child make a complaint to their placing authority. The manager has also complained to a placing authority about the lack of progress in sourcing an education provision, resulting in

one being found. She will challenge other professionals' decisions if she feels those decisions are not in the best interests of the child. She seeks out views from children and advocates for them when needed. Consequently, children feel valued and listened to.

The manager is diligent and thorough in her oversight of the children's plans and their progress. She frequently uses her monitoring systems to make sure there are ongoing improvements and that plans are in place for children to optimise their potential. As a result, children at the home continue to make exceptional progress.

As part of the manager's monitoring, she identified areas of the home that needed updating, one being the bathroom. The bathroom has been refurbished, though some snagging needs to be addressed and a blind needs fitting to the window.

The manager is proactive in making sure that staff receive the training they need to care for the children. She has identified and sourced additional training when shortfalls in staff's knowledge have been identified. Consequently, staff are well skilled to care for the children.

Staff receive regular supervision and say they feel well supported by the manager. One member of staff told the inspector they would not work anywhere else, and another said there is never a time they do not want to come to work. This support means that staff can give their very best to children.

The manager has undertaken research to improve the care for children. She has begun to research children moving on to foster care and how best to support them. More recently, she considered Christmas in care and how children can struggle at that time of year. The manager has looked at how staff support children and can make Christmas special. She has asked children if they believe in Santa and what their traditions are, so that they can be incorporated into the day. Staff have included children in secret Santa and made video calls to them, so they do not feel forgotten during the Christmas period.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any snagging is completed promptly following works and a blind is installed in the bathroom. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, and quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC362094

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Keys NHCC Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway,
Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Christine Bird

Registered manager: Rachael Strange

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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