

SC370910

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It provides care for up to three children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2024.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2025	Full	Good
07/11/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
30/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with two children during the inspection. Staff were supporting one child to return to the care of their parent in line with their local authority care plan.

Staff have nurturing relationships with the children and are committed to caring for them. This helps the children develop a sense of stability and security. One social worker said, 'This child has complex needs. Staff love them and they are settled.' This level of care and consistency has enabled children to achieve a sense of stability and make meaningful progress across all areas of their development.

All the children attend school. Staff recognise the challenges that children face in education. They take the children to and from school. They support the children to manage their anxieties before and after the school day through play. Staff and managers work closely with educational professionals to ensure children access bespoke learning packages. Consequently, children are making progress in their education. For example, one child achieved a level 1 qualification in performing arts.

Staff and managers work closely with each child's family. Staff communicate with parents and involve them in children's lives when possible. Staff regularly promote family time, and family visits are welcomed at the home. As a result, children maintain ties with important people in their lives.

Staff spend quality time with children. Staff play with the children and read them bedtime stories. Staff encourage the children to take part in varied activities, such as swimming, drama, visits to theme parks and walks to the park. This helps the children to develop their interests and supports them with their emotional well-being. Staff capture memorable events for children while participating in activities and with their families. This helps children keep special memories for the future.

Staff support each child to learn independence skills in line with the child's local authority support plan. Staff support children to learn skills such as cooking, keeping safe online, using public transport, budgeting and laundry. This helps children to prepare for their futures.

Children's records are detailed. However, some records have language which is not thoughtful and is potentially blaming and stigmatising. This could affect how children understand their experiences.

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

Children have trusted adults in the home, and this helps them to feel safe. The strong bonds between children and staff are reflected in their interactions. One child told a staff member, 'You are my favourite adult.'

When concerns about staff conduct are raised, managers respond appropriately. They quickly notify relevant professionals such as the local authority designated officer (LADO) and children's social workers. Managers complete internal investigations as guided by the LADO, and any practice concerns are addressed with staff.

Staff support children to express their wishes and feelings through tools such as 'choice boards'. One child asked staff to stay with them a bit longer in his room at bedtime. Staff responded by reading to them, and this helped the child to settle at bedtime. This helps children to feel secure because they are listened to.

Staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. They take account of their traumatic backgrounds to inform how they support and care for them. Staff are guided by a therapeutic worker, who provides individual and group sessions to them. Staff help children understand their emotions through the use of social stories. In addition, staff support children to calm down through using strategies that are unique to each child, for example by using sensory approaches such as water play for one child. A social worker said, 'There are days when the child is emotionally upset. Staff do not involve the police, and they try different strategies to help them.'

Children rarely go missing from home. When they do, they receive well-coordinated care. Staff follow clear protocols and make every effort to locate children and notify safeguarding professionals quickly. Children speak to independent professionals on their return, and staff learn from these conversations, preventing further recurrence. For example, one child would leave the home without adult permission because they wanted to spend more time with friends in the community. Consequently, staff increased social time for this child, and the frequency of incidents has reduced.

Due to the children's complex needs there have been several physical interventions to keep children safe. Staff use the least restrictive measures and there is a clear rationale for each hold used. Staff consistently make attempts to help children calm to avoid the use of restraint. Managers maintain good oversight of incidents and ensure that staff and children are spoken to. Following incidents, staff spend time with children to repair relationships. However, some incident records are not up to date.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The suitably experienced manager holds a relevant level 5 diploma. She is supported by a skilled deputy manager. They lead with confidence, are ambitious and have high aspirations for children to reach their potential. One parent said, 'The manager is always there. She adores [name of child] and nothing is ever too much.'

The manager leads a culture of positivity. She leads by example and drives excellent quality of care for children. She is creative in developing ways to support children. The manager has developed some innovative tools to support children and staff. For example, comprehensive parenting guides for staff to follow which exceed the usual support plans, and books and social stories to help children understand their emotions and difficult situations.

The manager has high expectations of staff and staff follow her lead. Staff have nurturing relationships with the children. The children feel loved and that staff care about them as well as for them. Staff describe the children in positive terms and are highly attuned to how they support each child. A social worker said, 'Staff have the child's best interests at heart. They understand their behaviour and enhance their experiences. I wish there were more houses like this for children'.

Leaders and managers have exceptional relationships with parents, social workers and schools and this helps children to make progress. Partner professionals and parents provide consistently positive feedback about the manager and staff team. An independent reviewing officer commented on a child's progress saying 'All these improvements have been down to leadership'.

The manager has ensured that the home environment values children and provides them with a warm cosy home. A newly introduced snug offers additional space where children can relax, socialise further enhancing their sense of comfort. The overall décor is of very high standard.

Staff feel highly valued and there is positive team morale. Managers support staff through high quality reflective supervision and team meetings that focus on staff well-being and children's needs.

The home is well staffed by a permanent workforce. Due to leaders and managers investment in staff, staff retention is high, and there is no use of agency staff. Consequently, children receive excellent continuity of care and achieve a sense of stability.

Leaders and managers inspire a learning culture. Managers and staff learn from incidents and from children suggesting how they want to be supported. This helps to improve practice. Staff receive a wide range of training that equips them with the skills to meet the needs of children. Most of the staff team are qualified or working towards the level 3 qualification. However, one staff member has passed the deadline for completion. Leaders and managers have identified this and are working to address it with the individual, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining a qualified and skilled workforce.

Leaders and managers promote staff progression to senior roles and have introduced dedicated development days. As a result of this initiative, three staff members

commenced their level 4 diplomas. In addition, the manager developed an employee handbook for staff, which has been shared regionally. This helps to keep staff motivated and committed to their roles.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	31 December 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are 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, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that children's case records are kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. Case records must be signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC370910

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: Emma Hemmings

Registered manager: Samantha McCulloch

Inspector

Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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