

SC370949

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2021.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2023	Full	Good
21/06/2021	Full	Good
10/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, four children have moved out and four children have moved in. All children spoke with the inspector.

The home is characterised by warmth and laughter. The manager is supported by a small group of long-standing staff members who know children well. Staff build strong, trusting relationships with children. This means that children have experienced stability and continuity of care despite an escalation in incidents.

Managers and staff keep in touch with children when they leave. Children respond and seek them out for advice as they grow into adulthood.

Children make good progress in education. Staff help motivate children to explore their academic and vocational interests. Staff encourage children to take part in extra-curricular clubs. One child took part in a musical performance and staff attended and celebrated the child's achievements. Staff talk to children about their future career options and have high aspirations for them. One child was supported to find and be successful in a part-time job.

Children are supported to spend time with family and friends. Staff supported a child at the child's family home on Christmas Day. This support meant the child created special memories with those important to them. Carefully considered plans ensure that children can spend time overnight with friends. Managers are committed to ensuring children have the same social opportunities as their peers.

Staff regularly explore children's wishes and act on them quickly. They support the children to express their views, and advocate on their behalf during meetings where necessary. One child asked to keep some pets. They now have these in their bedroom and have learned how to take care of animals.

Children take part in fun and exciting experiences. Memories of children's time spent at waterparks, completing charity bake sales and taking part in outdoor forest adventure activities are thoughtfully captured in books for children. Staff write letters to children, providing commentary on their important milestones. Children receive the letters when they leave to help them make sense of their time at the home.

Children are encouraged to be proud of their diversity and build their identity. Children share cooking skills and bake dishes linked to their heritage with other children and staff.

The home is warmly decorated. Staff take pride in and ownership of the personalisation and upkeep of the home. This encourages children to look after their home and helps them develop a sense of belonging.

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

Children say they feel safe and enjoy living here. Children rarely go missing. When they do, it is for a short period of time. Staff follow children when they leave and take effective action to ensure their safety. They welcome them back warmly with hugs and reassurance.

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities. Staff receive specialist advice about how to protect children from online exploitation. Age-appropriate restrictions are used on children's devices to ensure their safety is balanced with their right to privacy. Children talk to staff about their online behaviour and staff respond with empathy and helpful advice.

Children's plans provide detailed and individualised guidance to staff. When there have been incidents of self-harm, staff ensure the children's immediate well-being and seek medical care when necessary. Managers worked with social workers to ensure a child can receive good-quality mental health support. The child now attends regular therapeutic support sessions and is making progress.

Personalised incentive charts encourage children to develop independence skills and healthy routines. Children enjoy working towards rewards, such as going to beauty appointments and spending clothing gift vouchers. Consequences are restorative, and often include children writing handwritten letters of apology to help them think about the impact of unkind behaviours on others. As a result, children learn how to make amends and develop their social skills.

Safe recruitment practices ensure that all staff, including agency staff, are appropriately vetted before working with children.

Since the last inspection, there have been two investigations into a staff member's practice. Managers shared important information with the relevant agencies in a timely way and have taken action. Between allegations being known, a child raised further concerns. Although relevant agencies were notified, these concerns were not explored with enough curiosity, leading to further action needing to be taken later.

In the summer of 2024, there was an escalation in the seriousness and frequency of incidents for one child. The child was temporarily cared for at alternative accommodation. Staff helped children to reflect on bullying behaviours and to encourage positive social relationships. However, managers did not fully consider or plan for the risks associated with this change in accommodation and location.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is qualified and experienced. She has worked hard to provide emotional support and stability to children and staff since the last inspection.

A small, experienced staff team ensures that children's needs are well understood and met. When agency staff have been used to supplement the workforce, they are matched with experienced staff who know children well. This has had a stabilising impact for children.

Managers work in partnership with other agencies, including social workers, schools and the virtual school. The manager assertively challenges other professionals when she feels they have not worked in the child's best interest. This challenge is effective. On one occasion, a child received an apology from their social worker, and the intervention ultimately improved the quality of care the child received.

Staff feel that the manager is approachable and reliable. Supervision is regular and provides opportunities for staff to reflect on children's needs, behaviours and staff practice.

Team meetings are used to consider children's progress and for staff to agree consistent ways of working. One staff member leads on improvement in safeguarding practice. They share learning outcomes from highly relevant serious case reviews. These workshops mean that the staff team understands the importance of an open and honest culture.

Staff are provided with training to help them meet the individual needs of children. However, in December 2024, a staff member joined from another home in the organisation. They have not completed the relevant qualification within required timescales. Managers were not aware of the extent of the delay to this completion and have begun performance management processes. At the time of the inspection, it was not clear what the outcome of this action would be.

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 prepare and implement a policy which— is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)) In particular, ensure that each allegation of harm is managed separately, in line with the organisation's policy.	28 March 2025
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that managers assess and record how to reduce the risks to children when looking after them in accommodation outside the home.	28 March 2025

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; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the 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; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	28 March 2025
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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: SC370949

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: Zoe Hopkin

Inspector

Natalie Day, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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