

SC370956

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people aged between 12 and 17 years who have a variety of complex needs, and who require specialist support. The manager was registered by Ofsted in February 2017 and is suitably qualified.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 29 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The children say that staff have helped them to understand the COVID-19 pandemic. The children and staff are provided with the personal protective equipment they need to maintain their safety. The staff have provided the children with a good variety of activities and supported their education during the COVID-19 lockdown period. A range of stimulating activities took place at the home and in the community when it was safe to do so. The staff purchased additional games during the lockdown period to ensure that children did not become bored or frustrated. Staff also helped children to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Children make progress in their education. One child, who had consistently refused to take part in education, has begun a college course. Another child is thriving at a specialist school, which she enjoys attending. A child who has recently moved into the home does not yet have a formal school placement. However, applications have been made to local schools. In the absence of formal education, the staff are supporting this child's education by providing online tutoring. A structured timetable is also in place to supplement online learning with vocational skills, such as horse riding.

The staff support the children with their health needs, including by providing them with emotional support. Staff actively challenged external professionals when one child was denied therapeutic support. This led to the child being offered the treatment that she required. This demonstrates that the staff are good advocates for the children.

The progress children make is underpinned by the positive relationships they have with staff. Children speak highly of the staff team. The children say that they are happy at the home and are confident to talk to staff about any concerns that they may have.

The safety of children

The inspector was aware during this assurance visit that an alleged serious incident had occurred at the home since the last inspection. This was investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the home in response to the incidents were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the visit. This informed the inspector's judgement.

The manager ensures that safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to the designated officer following allegations made against staff. In addition, the manager notifies Ofsted at the time that a concern has been received. This enables Ofsted to ensure that effective action has been taken to safeguard children.

There have been no restraints for over six months. Episodes of children going missing are infrequent. When incidents do occur, the staff act swiftly to prompt the

child's safe return. This demonstrates that the home is a generally settled and stable environment for children.

The staff have significantly improved their ability to identify and address bullying behaviours. They understand the underlying factors that lead to bullying behaviours and plan effective interventions. Consequently, children feel safe.

Risk assessments are thorough, subject to regular review and reflect the changing needs of the children. The staff are not risk averse; they help children to experience a range of opportunities while carefully considering the potential benefits and disadvantages.

Staff are now managing the children's social media use effectively. This increases the safety of children. An excellent piece of work has been undertaken to ensure that all staff are aware of how to make the required checks on the children's social media use. A guide has been produced by a staff member detailing how to make checks on a variety of social media platforms.

Leaders and managers

A senior manager from within the organisation has provided high-quality support to the home's manager. This has enabled the manager to make significant improvements in the quality of care provided to children.

Placement matching has improved. The manager has reviewed potential referrals very carefully, ensuring a stronger focus on making sure that the mix of children is right. This enables the children to have a more positive experience at the home.

External professionals said that they have been impressed with the way in which the manager has advocated for children and the fact that he has been consistently child-centred.

The manager provides staff with good-quality supervision that addresses poor practice and promotes improvement. However, one member of staff has not achieved a relevant level 3 qualification within the required timescale. As a result, this staff member is not sufficiently qualified.

The manager has not provided an internal monitoring report to Ofsted in line with regulation. This does not enable Ofsted to have an accurate oversight of 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, 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
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. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b)(6)(a)(b))	30/12/2020
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (4)(a))	12/11/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC370956

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Soloist Building, 1 Lanyon Place, Belfast,
Northern Ireland BT1 3LP

Responsible individual: Janet Porter

Registered manager: Adam Tarrant

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector

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