

SC370956

Registered provider: Keys Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for four children with social and emotional difficulties.

There is no registered manager and this post has been vacant since April 2024.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 July 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2023	Full	Good
24/08/2022	Full	Outstanding
28/07/2021	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Overall, children's experiences and progress are good. Interactions between staff and children are relaxed and supportive. The home feels welcoming, and staff have put thought into creating spaces the children will enjoy using. For example, there is a games room and gym area for the children to spend social time together.

Children have made progress in education from their starting points when moving to the home. Staff have helped children to understand the importance of education. One child spent a significant amount of time out of school. The home worked tirelessly with professionals to get the child into a mainstream school. She has recently completed her GCSE exams.

Feedback from a family member outlines the nurture and care the children receive. A family member said: 'They care for her brilliantly, they care for her greatly. They always keep me informed when things are happening, whatever happens. They are always there. They have always got her best interests at heart.'

Children's time with families is encouraged and supported. Staff ensure there are arrangements in place for children to spend time with people who are important to them. There is overall good communication with family members and professionals. Staff supervise time with family where necessary and use this space to build positive relationships with family members. This contributes to the stability of children's placements.

Clear plans and advocacy have not been in place for one child in their transition to adulthood. The staff and local authority have not worked collaboratively to ensure there is a robust transition plan in place for the child. Actions arising from the review have not taken place for the child to have a referral for additional support into adulthood. This could have an impact on the experiences and progress of the child moving on from the home.

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

Staff apply a restorative approach in relation to behaviour management, supporting children to learn and be educated rather than punished. For one child, there has been a positive significant impact through management of a serious incident. Reflection and learning have been a priority for the child. This has been achieved through a focus on relationships with the child, resulting in no further incidents of this nature.

Physical interventions are only used as a last resort. This is a significant reduction since the last inspection. There has been a focus on the ethos in the home, through building relationships and connection with children.

The use of consequences is rare. When they have been used, they have been proportionate and restorative for children. The staff focus on positive praise and achievement. This has helped the children to build confidence and self-esteem.

The recruitment of staff is managed well, and the recruitment procedures are designed to safeguard children. Safer recruitment practices and protocols are followed. This means that prospective staff are subject to clear vetting processes. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working in the home.

Safeguarding arrangements require improvement. Staff do not always put in place the strategies set out in children's risk assessments. This has led to repeated incidents of substance misuse for one child that have not always been acted on by staff appropriately. There has not been learning or support provided for the child involved in substance misuse. Staff have not referred the child to the appropriate services, which a specialist adviser had asked them to do. There has been a delay in getting help and support for the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There is currently no registered manager and the post is vacant. Senior leaders have made interim arrangements that the home has oversight from the deputy manager and an experienced manager from another home.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2024 and management oversight has been impacted through this vacancy. Leaders and managers do not have robust oversight and monitoring in place. Errors and discrepancies have happened with medication. They have not been discovered, nor has action been taken to reflect and learn.

On occasions, the manager's oversight and direction have not been consistent with the provider's ethos and statement of purpose. A complaint from a child was taken seriously and clear processes took place. However, the recommendations from the complaint were not followed up and fulfilled with a staff member. This has not allowed the staff member to learn, reflect and develop.

The members of the staff team do not all have training to meet the children's individual needs. Some staff have not achieved the level 3 qualification in residential childcare within the timescales stipulated in the regulation. This will provide staff with the fundamental training to make sure they feel fully equipped to provide children with the best possible care.

Staff enjoy working at the home. Staff and managers receive effective support through supervision discussions and team meetings. Discussion is focused on the needs of the children and how staff can provide the support they need.

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 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) This specifically applies to ensuring that incidents involving substance misuse have appropriate action taken in line with protocols in place to keep the child safe. Staff need the appropriate skills to identify the risk to the child and act accordingly, ensuring that support, reflection and learning are in place for the child to reduce the risk.	24 October 2024

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically applies to ensuring there is an experienced manager registered in post with clear oversight and monitoring systems in place to ensure the care of children is not impacted. Clear processes for auditing medication and processes following serious incidents need to be robust. Leaders and managers need to ensure staff are appropriately trained to the requirements of the level 3 qualification and training for children with specific needs.	27 September 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	25 October 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that arrangements are in place to—

manage and review the placement of each child in the home;
and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iii))

This specifically relates to ensuring there are clear and effective plans in place for children moving on from the home and transitions into adulthood. The plans in place need to be consistent with those of the placing authority and in the child's best interests.

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: SC370956

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: Katie Harrison

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Eleanor Quanbrough, Social Care Inspector

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