

SC374268

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 and is part of a large national organisation. It provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties due to past trauma.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2020.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 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: 18 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/12/2024	Full	Good
20/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
21/03/2023	Full	Good
14/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into and out of the home. There are two children living at the home who were living there at the time of the last inspection. The inspector spoke with both children during the inspection.

Children are making progress. Both children are now attending school, which is a significant achievement from their starting points. Staff have helped children overcome barriers to their education. This has included providing practical support and working with a school to tailor their timetable to a child's needs. Children's improved engagement is likely to have a positive impact on their long-term outcomes. One child is also engaging with external services which will support their well-being.

Children are actively engaged in extra-curricular activities that encourage their interests, build confidence and promote personal development. One child attends a weightlifting club, which has contributed to their physical well-being and self-esteem. Their recent success in a competition was a source of pride that they are eager to share with others. Another child participates in football clubs and has been offered the opportunity to trial with professional teams. These opportunities for children not only nurture their talents but also support the development of social skills and teamwork.

Feedback about the home is overwhelmingly positive. One professional said, 'They have done everything they should do and need to.' Children report that they feel happy and safe living at the home and can recognise the progress they are making.

Overall, the home provides a warm, homely and welcoming environment for children. Children's items are found around the home, which contributes to their sense of belonging. However, some areas of the home have become tired and worn and would benefit from improved upkeep. Managers have plans to address this.

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

There has been one allegation during the inspection period. This was managed with sensitivity and a strong child-centred approach. The manager ensured that the child was fully involved in the process, with their voice actively heard and their feelings validated. The child expressed surprise and a sense of empowerment, stating they were not used to being heard. This reflects the manager's commitment to building trusting relationships and creating a safe environment where children feel valued and believed.

Staff respond robustly when children are missing from home. They demonstrate persistence and care, including following children, searching known locations and contacting friends and family. Staff are proactive in disrupting risky behaviours and work closely with children to help them understand the potential dangers they face.

Restraint is used only when necessary to protect children or others and as a last resort. All incidents of restraint are proportionate and carefully reviewed by the manager. Each incident is followed by a debrief and reflective discussions, which support continuous improvement in practice and accountability.

The use of consequences is rare, with a clear emphasis on restorative approaches and praise to help children learn appropriate behaviours. The manager maintains effective oversight of these, ensuring that their use remains appropriate.

On occasion, the police have been called when staff have been unable to safely manage children's behaviour. While this support may have been necessary to protect the child and others from harm, it reflects challenges in staff's ability to manage children's behaviour, and there is no pre-agreed strategy in place as to when police support may be needed. This lack of planning undermines the home's therapeutic ethos and increases the risk of unnecessary criminalisation of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a dedicated manager who provides strong and effective leadership. She is a positive role model for her team, leading by example and setting clear expectations through her own practice. Children have developed trusting and positive relationships with her, and her active involvement in their daily lives contributes to their sense of safety and belonging. One child said, 'She supports me through the bad times too.'

Staff speak highly of the manager's support and guidance. They say that this promotes their professional development and contributes to a well-informed and confident team.

The manager engages effectively with the wider network to promote the best outcomes for children. She is not afraid to challenge decisions when it is in the best interests of the child.

Team meetings are held regularly and provide a valuable forum for staff to reflect on practice, share information and discuss the needs and progress of children. The manager uses these meetings to reinforce expectations and ensure that staff are well informed.

Staff receive the training required to undertake their roles effectively. Regular supervision is provided and is reported by staff to be useful and well structured. These sessions offer opportunities for reflection and contribute to the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

The manager completes monthly audits to monitor the quality of care provided. She analyses patterns and trends to drive improvement. This helps ensure that care remains consistent with the home's ethos and responsive to the individual needs of children. While these systems are generally effective, the manager has failed to identify that the

home does not have the most up-to-date local authority information. This may limit staff's ability to make informed decisions in the best interests of the children.

Recruitment checks are, in the main, carried out in line with legislative requirements. However, they have not consistently verified that staff hold the qualifications they have declared. This means there is a risk that not all staff have had the appropriate training for 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.

Requirements	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; 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— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This requirement was raised at last inspection and is restated.	25 August 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home 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 that each child's relevant plans are followed;	15 September 2025

that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.

(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)(c)(e)(i))

In particular, ensure that there are agreed strategies with children's placing authorities around managing children's behaviour to reduce the necessity for police intervention. In addition, ensure that placing authorities provide up-to-date statutory information.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, they should ensure that maintenance issues are attended to promptly and seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than institutional impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the 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: SC374268

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: Gemma Moore

Registered manager: Natalie Thompson

Inspector

Chrisoula Contoyianni, Social Care Inspector

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