

SC374640

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a large national organisation. The home is registered to look after and care for up to three children and young people. One young person was living at the home during this inspection. The manager was registered with Ofsted in March 2020.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 1 October 2019

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 young person told the inspector that the care he receives here is akin to 'living a normal life'. He said, 'this is my home' and described staff who care for him as 'my family'. The young person spoke confidently about the progress he has made and could identify where he needs further support, so he can live independently in the future.

The manager and the core team of staff know the young person well, and they use this knowledge to respond appropriately to his daily needs. Relationships are good; interactions between the staff and young person were observed to be relaxed and respectful.

All staff are provided with information in care and behaviour support plans about how to meet young people's needs. However, these plans include information about young people's behaviours and risks that are no longer current and as such could lead to confusion. In addition, young people do not want to read or contribute to these plans.

The young person's interests, hobbies and talents are promoted. During the lockdown period, the young person was supported to broaden his interest in music. He is now learning to play the guitar and is looking forward to starting singing lessons. The young person's self-esteem and confidence have grown as a result.

The young person's educational programme has been maintained during the pandemic. The manager and staff have been creative, using the young person's interests to engage him and have included them in his education programme.

The safety of children

Young people are, in the main, helped and protected effectively. Weaknesses identified at this assurance visit relate to an emergency admission during the lockdown period.

Prior to agreeing the admission, the manager reviewed the information provided by the local authority and he assessed that the young person's needs could be met. However, the manager did not thoroughly explore the impact that the new young person's known behaviours would have on the young person already living at the home. As a result, incidents took place that placed both young people and the staff at risk of harm. The manager's oversight and monitoring of these incidents were effective. He escalated his concerns to senior leaders and worked appropriately with safeguarding agencies. Collectively, it was agreed that the manager and team could not meet one young person's needs or keep him safe, and he has since moved into a new placement.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities when a child protection concern is identified. They follow and implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively. Most of the staff have continued to access training in a variety of ways. Good use is made of online refresher training, team discussions and group training

sessions using a range of social media services. This helps the staff to recognise risks and keep young people safe.

Leaders and managers

Since the last inspection, a new manager has been appointed and successfully registered with Ofsted. Since his appointment, the manager has completed a comprehensive action and development plan. Significant progress has been made in all areas of the plan. All requirements raised at the last inspection have been met.

The manager has a good understanding of the team's strengths and weaknesses. The team shares the manager's vision and drive to improve the quality of care and services they provide for young people.

Staff spoken to as part of the assurance visit spoke highly of the manager. One member of staff said, 'The manager's ability to form relationships with children is phenomenal; he leads by example.'

Staff said that due to the restrictions associated with COVID-19, receiving regular formal supervisions was problematic. However, they said that during the lockdown period telephone support from the manager and senior leaders was always available.

Feedback about the quality of care continues to be positive. Two professionals and a parent who contributed to this assurance visit confirmed that the registered manager and team are very good at communicating and sharing information.

One requirement and one recommendation have been raised as a result of this assurance visit.

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
14: The care planning standard 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—	11/01/2020

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

that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)2(f))

In particular, ensure that care plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments are clear, concise and relevant, to ensure that all staff are provided with clear instructions on how to meet the young people's current needs. In addition, encourage children to read and add further information to these plans.

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC374640

Registered provider: Keys Cwc Ltd

Registered provider address: Keys Ltd, Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Gemma Moore

Registered manager: Sean Manifold

Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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