

Children's home – Interim inspection

Inspection date	13/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC386505
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Keys Education Limited
Registered provider address	Hurstwood Court, Laganwood House, New Hall Hey Road, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Marc Murphy
Registered manager	Michael Merrison
Inspector	Chris Scully

Inspection date	13/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. A qualified registered manager leads this home. He is also the registered manager of a second home, which is a one-bed home a short distance away. Currently, there is insufficient information to demonstrate that the registered manager has effective daily oversight over both homes. This is because there is no system in place to actually record the time that he spends at each home. A deputy manager has recently commenced working at this home, following an induction. The registered manager said that this will help him to be more effective as a manager and to have improved managerial oversight of both homes. The registered manager acknowledged that the lack of a deputy had affected his ability to complete supervision with each member of staff in a timely manner. The lack of regular supervision does not provide staff with the opportunities to discuss practice, their professional development, and new guidance relevant to their role. However, he is confident that staff will receive regular supervision going forward. During the inspection the home received a telephone call from a young person's school, regarding a comment he had made about having inappropriate images on his iPad. Staff informed the registered manager and were about to open the iPad to look for the images to investigate further. This highlighted that the child protection and e-safety policy does not provide effective guidance to staff on how to manage such situations and social media more generally. The home has a copy of the non-statutory guidance, 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'. However, the manager and staff have not yet considered this guidance in the context of dealing with the concern that was raised and how it would inform the home's policy and the staff's response. Overall, this fails to keep young people and staff safe. The home's standard of accommodation and décor has declined and as such young people's safety and well-being are compromised. Young people's bedrooms were observed to be in a poor state of repair with a poor standard of cleanliness. A number of wardrobes and draw units are damaged. Some have exposed hinges, which pose a risk to young people's safety. Window restrictors have been forcibly removed from their frames and have not been repaired or replaced. Two bedrooms smelled strongly of smoke, and tobacco and cigarette-making products were visible. There are no blinds on some bedroom windows. The registered manager	

said that these have not been there for some time. Although curtains were in place, which afforded some privacy for young people, it was not evident that any consideration had been given to asking new residents if they would like blinds. There was also graffiti on some walls, a door and a table. The graffiti included swear words and a reference to '[initial of young person] was here 2/3/17'. There was also a hole in the landing wall and a damaged air vent had not been repaired or made sufficiently safe. The cleanliness of bedrooms is of particular concern given that it was stated that it is a 'house rule' that young people are to clean their rooms with staff on a Saturday prior to receiving their pocket money.

The maintenance book shows that these issues have not been reported to maintenance. One young person said that he removed his wardrobe doors over a week ago. Another young person has been absent from care every night since 27 February 2017. Staff have not considered that tidying his room and making the bed may encourage him to stay in the home. Effective incentives have not been considered to reduce the graffiti in the home, such as encouraging young people to design a wall in their room.

One young person is staying overnight with a former resident in their home. For this young person there are two missing-from-care risk assessments in place, so it is unclear which is the most current. This means that staff may miss valuable information, which may hinder their search for a young person or other enquiries. Staff are completing checks and encouraging him to return, but this has been unsuccessful. They are reporting him as absent from care to the police. Staff and social workers have been slow to respond to this safeguarding concern, given the age of the young person. A meeting has been arranged for this week, but as yet there are no firm plans in place to manage this situation. This hinders the home's ability to keep this young person safe and leaves him at the potential risk of harm. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the police missing-from-care coordinators have expressed concern about this relationship and the potential volatility of both young people.

Overall, the police did report that the home works well with them and is good at following missing-from-care protocols and at being proactive in looking for young people. They said that there has been little involvement with the police in recent months apart from this specific issue of concern.

Young people's healthcare needs are not consistently supported. This is because some staff are unaware of individual young people's needs, such as nut allergies. Staff said that the allergies for one young person are mild and that they prepare his food. The young person's healthcare plan does not make clear the severity or impact of the allergy. Also, the young person's health plan refers to other health matters such as having asthma, eczema and hay fever, but there are no references as to how these affect him and what support is needed or in place for him. Additionally, risk assessments regarding his medical needs relating to the allergy and self-harm are not in place. His risk assessment regarding the self-administration of medication does not take into consideration his current medication, and some staff are unaware of some medication, such as creams and

lotion that the young person is currently using. Consequently, staff are unable to provide consistent care and support concerning young people's healthcare needs.

Monitoring of the home is not yet robust. The registered manager's reports are ineffective and fail to identify emerging patterns, trends, what the home does well and areas for improvement, such as shortfalls in records. This significantly affects the registered manager's ability to drive forward continuous improvements. The registered manager has been honest and open about the failings in reporting. Plans are in place to address this shortfall since the appointment of a deputy manager.

During the course of the inspection, staff managed a prolonged incident in the home well. They successfully managed to distract and calm a young person who was highly agitated and who was damaging property and yelling abusive language at staff. The staff persevered and provided ways out for the young person, such as going for a walk or going to his room. Eventually he calmed sufficiently for staff to talk to him and to take him to a sandwich shop to allow him time out of the home. This young person has caused a lot of damage in the home in recent weeks. However, the staff and the registered manager are clear that they can support and help him and are committed to building trusting and positive relationships with him. They recognise that the young person is struggling with adjusting to another new home in a short space of time, following a foster placement breakdown, and are sensitive to the issues of attachment and resilience.

It is testimony to the staff that, given his level of aggression at times, this has only resulted in one physical intervention. However, this was not effectively recorded. This is because it is on loose sheets of paper as the young person's individual physical intervention book was not ready at the time. The record does not give specific information about the duration of each intervention by staff. A registered manager from another home has evaluated this and they have not identified the shortfalls in recording. This also includes the attached incident record, which was dated several days prior to the incident and contains the name of a member of staff who was not involved in the incident. This is not effective recording. Inaccurate recording leaves the home at risk of challenge and does not provide the correct information to the young person should he wish to access this information, now or in the future.

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several homes owned and managed by a limited company. The home provides care and support for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2016	Full	Good
24/11/2015	Full	Good
29/09/2015	Full	Inadequate
05/03/2015	Full	Adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meet(s) 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
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure: (2)(a) that staff help each child to – (i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; (ii) understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. In particular, the registered person must ensure that healthcare plans clearly outline the young person's medical needs, the medication that they are taking and the risks of failing to do so. The registered person must also ensure that all staff are fully conversant with the young person's plans and are able to implement these in practice.	28/04/2017
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure: 2(a)(i) 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 harm to the child. In particular, the registered person must ensure that the missing-from-care risk assessment and risk assessments regarding self-administration of medication, self-harm and allergies reflect the young people's current needs and the preventative strategies that are in place to help keep them safe.	28/04/2017

12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure: 2(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. In particular, the registered person must ensure that maintenance work is reported and carried out swiftly, concerning damaged bedroom furniture, window dressings, window restrictors, graffiti on walls and furniture. They must also improve the cleanliness of young people's bedrooms.	28/04/2017
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure: 2(e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. In particular, the registered person must ensure that the policies surrounding e-safety and social media take into consideration relevant guidance on reporting concerns about sexual images and the action that staff should take.	28/04/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development, receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	28/04/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	28/04/2017
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that a record of when the registered manager is actually working in the home is maintained.	28/04/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure that the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under Regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

In particular, ensure that reports by the registered manager are evaluative, identify emerging patterns and trends, and provide an analysis of what the home does well and the areas for improvement.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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