

## Children's home inspection – Full

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>             | <b>31/01/2017</b>                                                                                      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | <b>SC487488</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>          | <b>Full</b>                                                                                            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>           | <b>Children's home</b>                                                                                 |
| <b>Registered provider</b>         | <b>Keys Childcare Ltd</b>                                                                              |
| <b>Registered provider address</b> | <b>Keys Attachment Centre,<br/>Hurstwood Court, Rawtensall,<br/>Rossendale, Lancashire BB4<br/>6HR</b> |

|                               |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Marc Murphy</b>      |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Michael Merrison</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Chris Scully</b>     |

|                                                                                                 |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>31/01/2017</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Requires improvement</b>    |

**SC487488**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people develop useful skills and strategies that help them to keep themselves safe.
- Young people report that they feel safe here. The home works in partnership with placing authorities, police and others to ensure that young people who are missing return home safely. Police are complimentary about the lengths that the registered manager and staff go to, in order to locate young people.
- Young people are well supported to remain in contact with people who are important to them and are fully included in agreeing contact arrangements.
- Staff are positive advocates for young people. The staff listen to what young people have to say, for example, about their education and they work hard to help young people to achieve their individual goals. This helps to improve educational outcomes for the young people and their future career opportunities.
- Young people who have recently moved on into semi-independent living are doing well because of the support offered to them in the lead up to the move. They were fully involved in choosing their new home and were able to purchase a wide range of items for their new home in preparation. As a result, they moved onto the next stage of their lives confidently.
- External monitoring of the home is improving and is helping the registered manager to identify and address shortfalls. However, the internal monitoring is not yet robust, as it does not clearly identify what the home does well or needs to improve on. It has failed to identify shortfalls in record-keeping and the formalisation of the workforce development plan. The issues concerning record-keeping are compounded by the ongoing vacancies for a deputy and second senior member of staff and lack of a formal workforce development plan.

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

### Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meet(s) 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Due date   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and deliver the outcomes, set out in the statement of purpose.</p> <p>This is with particular regard to the appointment of a deputy manager and a further senior member of staff.</p> | 31/03/2017 |

### Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on young people in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the young person must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Ensure that the registered manager makes the best use of independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties in reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdown ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24). In particular, this includes identifying patterns and trends, what the home does well or needs to improve and the effectiveness of the action taken to address shortfalls.
- Ensure that the registered person has a workforce development plan, which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of Regulation 16, Schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8). In particular, secure the appointment of a deputy and senior member of staff, and ensure that the further

training required for staff, including the registered manager, is regularly updated.

- Ensure that records are kept, detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (Regulation 36 (schedule 3)(14)). Evaluations of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff to record and retain evidence of what worked well ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31). In particular, ensure that records are sufficiently detailed.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is one of several homes owned and managed by the company. It is registered to provide care and support to one young person who has emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 27/09/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 03/11/2015      | Full            | Good                    |

## Inspection judgements

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people's views are central to the way in which the home operates. The staff value young people's opinions and provide regular opportunities for them to share their views. The young person currently living at the home confirmed that staff listen to her and have helped her to organise her bedroom and to settle in. The young person is pleased that she has been able to have two pet mice, which she looks after attentively. She said that she is building what she considers to be positive relationships with staff, but admits that it is still 'early days'.</p> <p>The previous young person recently moved into semi-independent accommodation. Staff provided good support to her during the transition period. The young person's views were key to everything that was agreed. She was not happy with the first accommodation offered to her, so she worked with staff to research alternative options and decided on one that she felt best met her idea of 'what a home should look like'. With the support of the staff, she confidently made informed choices about what she needed and made best use of the allocated monies. She said that she was pleased to be moving out, but would miss the staff. She continues to keep in regular contact with the staff from the home, which provides her with links to the past and offers her support and comfort.</p> <p>Practical arrangements are in place to meet young people's known and developing physical health needs. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians. They are very well supported and encouraged to attend their routine health appointments. As a result, young people are engaging more with a variety of healthcare professionals to meet their individual needs. Staff maintain good links with professionals from specialist health services, such as substance and alcohol misuse teams and smoking cessation specialists. Consequently, these issues are reducing for the young person who has recently moved on.</p> <p>Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their identity and heritage. They ensure that the young people are able to maintain regular contact with family and friends, in line with their individual care plan arrangements. Contact visits are supported and managed well by the staff, especially for those children who live a long way from home. The staff follow effectively the contact plans that have been devised, in consultation with the local authority. Staff are aware of the emotional impact that contact can have on the young people and provide sensitive support to them at these times. As a result, the young people are able to enjoy regular contact with those who are important to them in a safe and positive way.</p> <p>Staff work well with young people to ensure that they receive the right support for</p> |                 |

their education. The previous young person returned to her part-time employment, following some mediation and support from the staff. This enabled her to resolve the difficulties that she was experiencing with her employer and to make informed decisions about what she needed to do. As a result, she continues to thrive in a job that she enjoys. She happily re-engaged with education as a result of staff's prompting and achieved additional qualifications, effectively enhancing her future career opportunities.

The new young person is currently having support from a home tutor, as a suitable education provision has not yet been sourced. The registered manager is actively chasing this with the local authority, the virtual headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The registered manager is tenacious in pushing this with the relevant person, to ensure that the right placement is secured for her. In the meantime, a tutor is working with her on a day-to-day basis. The tutor said that the young person is very bright and had spoken to her about the lack of challenge in the first week. At the young person's request, her education was increased to five days a week, and more challenging work has been provided. The young person said that it was good that staff listened to her and that she had more tutoring to help her with her education.

Plans are in place to support the currently placed young person on a day-to-day basis. However, the plans have not been updated to fully reflect her emerging needs, and there is some conflicting information, such as the amount of time she can spend away from the home. The young person explained that she is with staff all the time, but if she is angry she can have 15 minutes away from the home on her own. She explained that this is irrelevant as she does not know the area so said, 'Where would I go?' There are also some anomalies in the risk assessments and healthcare plan that have not been identified through monitoring.

The young person is currently finding her feet in the home and is beginning to explore the area with staff. Her social worker said that they are pleased with the placement thus far and that the registered manager and staff communicate well with her. The social worker is reassured that the young person is safe and is settling in well to her new home.

The young person is aware of various opportunities in the community, but as yet has chosen not to engage with these. The former young person had a very active social life. She enjoyed spending time with her friends outside of the home as well as with staff, as she felt comfortable with them.

Young people live in a warm, welcoming environment. The home has recently been redecorated, and the new young person has chosen the decor and furnishings for her bedroom. She confidently negotiates with staff about the type of furniture that she needs, such as a desk, and about why the one provided is not suitable. There was one small area of concern in the property, which was immediately actioned by the registered manager. This related to the window dressing in the bathroom, because it did not sufficiently maintain the young person's and staff's privacy.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people's safety and well-being are of paramount importance to the staff. Effective multi-agency working helps to keep them safe. Police missing from care coordinators and area police colleagues said that the home is proactive in searching for young people. They commended the home for reducing the incidents of going missing from care for the previous resident from up to 22 episodes a month to one a month. This was because of the relationships that they had built with the young person and the agreements that they would collect her after she had seen her friends. This meant that she came home safe and well. On the occasions when she was missing, she would keep in touch with staff, telling them who she was with and that she was safe. This was something that she had not done in the past.</p> <p>Missing from care risk assessments are usually robust. However, for the new young person this is not yet the case. There is conflicting information in the risk assessment, which means that staff may not follow the correct plan for her. Missing from care records are not always completed to the same high standard. This makes it difficult for staff to analyse the incident and reflect on what has gone well, or what changes or updates to risk assessments are required. These are recording issues, which have not been identified through monitoring. The current young person does not have a history of going missing from care. Therefore, it is imperative that clear plans are in place to cover for this eventuality.</p> <p>Staff are clear about the young people's levels of risk and vulnerabilities and can verbalise the actions that they take in supporting young people during these times.</p> <p>Young people respond well to the clear boundaries in place, and these are consistently applied by staff. As a result, physical interventions are extremely rare.</p> <p>The young person currently living at the home is aware that there may be consequences for negative behaviour and, while this has not yet happened for her, she said that she thought that they 'sound ok'. Rewards are used well in order to help young people to recognise and improve behaviour. These include additional monies for activities or meals out, which are received well by young people. Young people are fully involved in deciding on their choice of rewards. However, sanction records do not consistently record the effectiveness of the measures used so that they can analyse the effect on helping young people to change their behaviour.</p> <p>Young people are protected due to the robust approach to the recruitment and</p> |                 |

selection of staff. Visitors and work colleagues are also vetted and appropriately supervised when attending the home.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <p>The registered manager continues to manage this home and another home for three young people in Runcorn. He is a qualified and experienced manager who works effectively in partnership with other agencies. The home has been carrying vacancies for a deputy and a senior member of staff for some time. Although recruitment has been undertaken, appointees to the roles subsequently withdrew. There is an ongoing recruitment for both posts, and the registered manager and area manager are both committed to securing the best person for the post. The area manager states that senior managers are currently reviewing the job specification for both posts to see if any alterations are required. In the meantime, additional support has been provided from other managers in the organisation. However, this has not provided consistency for staff, and the lack of consistent oversight may have contributed to the shortfalls identified at this inspection.</p> <p>The staff said that they feel well supported and can talk to the registered manager at any time. They are aware of the on-call system and are confident to use this should the need arise. The staff spoke confidently about the training opportunities provided and said that this helps them to reflect on their practice. For example, recent training delivered by the police about young people who go missing has prompted the staff to review what else they could do to keep young people safe should they go missing.</p> <p>Some staff do not yet hold a relevant childcare qualification. However, they are enrolled onto an appropriate course and are progressing well. Sound systems are in place for the induction of new staff to the home, and a number of training courses are planned for staff as part of ongoing professional development over the coming months. Staff new to the home said that they feel well supported.</p> <p>External monitoring of the home is improving. The independent person provides reports on what the home is doing well and areas for improvement. The registered manager acknowledges this improvement and explained how he had changed some things in the light of this. For example, the manager initiated a new method of recording what young people are eating and of ensuring that the previous young person's key worker had completed all of the necessary paperwork for the young person. The registered manager also conducts his own monitoring of the home, but</p> |                             |

this is not yet robust. This is because it does not demonstrate what the home does well, what needs to improve or the action taken to address shortfalls. This means that shortfalls in documents are not readily identified or addressed. Similarly, it does not demonstrate what the home does well, for example the significant decrease in missing from care and how this has been achieved.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have 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 have 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 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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