

1277304

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate one child with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned by a national private provider of children's homes.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 28 July 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

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 identified the following widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit:

- The current management arrangements are not robust. There has not been a registered manager in post since February 2020.

- The internal quality monitoring arrangements of the home are ineffective.
- The staff team is variable and inconsistent. Staffing rotas are not up to date to ensure that the child knows who will be caring for him each day.
- Behaviour management of the child living in the home is not effective. The child lacks boundaries and consistent care. Too often the staff appease the child to manage his behaviour.
- Behaviour management plans, placement plans and risk assessments are not kept up to date and do not comprehensively offer the staff guidance on how best to care for the child.
- The staff fail to always supervise the child's access to the internet. The child is playing a violent game on his games console that he has downloaded from the internet.
- The child's views and wishes are not being regularly taken into account.
- The staff do not ensure that the child is eating a healthy, balanced diet.

The care of children

The child is not receiving the consistent, nurturing care that he needs. Constant changes of staff in the home mean that the child has been unable to form trusting and stable relationships with adults.

The staff fail to ensure that the child is eating healthily. He is being appeased by the staff, who regularly allow him to miss breakfast and then go out all day with his friends. The child is being given money by the staff to buy his own lunch. No monitoring is being undertaken of what he is eating when he is out.

The child's placement plan is not kept up to date and therefore provides out-of-date and incorrect information and guidance to the staff. Many of the staff do not regularly work in the home and rely on these documents to understand how best to care for the child. Consequently, staff too often give the child mixed messages and inconsistent care. This inconsistency makes the child feel angry and leads to violent incidents in the home.

The views and wishes of the child are not regularly recorded. It is not possible to see if the child has been consulted about his views of the current situation in the home. This failure has led to him and his family making complaints about the staff and the home.

The safety of children

The staff are not vigilant and are not closely supervising the child's use of the internet. The staff were not aware that he had downloaded a game for his games console that is violent and unsuitable for his age.

The child is going missing less often than when he arrived at the home. However, due to a lack of consistent staffing, too often he is being appeased by the staff so that they can manage his behaviour. Some staff allow him to not hand his phone in

at night, as agreed with his social worker, and give in to the child's demands to be taken for a late-night drive in the home's car, instead of imposing age-appropriate rules and boundaries.

The risk management plans for the child are not up to date and fail to identify the risks he is exposed to when, for example, he is out on free time.

The lack of trusting, consistent relationships with staff have led to a series of allegations and threats from the child towards the staff. He is increasingly gaining inappropriate control in the home due to a failure of the staff to manage his behaviour effectively.

Leaders and managers

The home has been without a registered manager since February 2020. Two managers have been appointed but left shortly after taking up the post. Attempts to recruit to the post have been unsuccessful.

The interim management arrangements are not providing robust management oversight or implementing quality monitoring arrangements to ensure that the child is receiving good-quality, consistent care.

Staffing rotas do not show the child which staff are on duty in the home for the week ahead, so he does not know who will be looking after him.

There is no core team. There is a lack of information sharing or teamwork. This is not helped by the constant changing of staff working in the home. The home currently has only one qualified member of staff permanently assigned to the home.

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
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children to achieve their potential;</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	28/09/2020

<p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>Equip the child with information about who will be caring for him and when.</p> <p>Ensure that robust management monitoring and oversight takes place in relation to incidents and that any learning from incidents is disseminated to the team.</p> <p>Ensure that an up-to-date placement plan is in place and available, which has been read by the manager and staff.</p>	
<p>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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(ii)(v)(vi))</p> <p>In particular:</p>	<p>28/09/2020</p>

<p>Staff must monitor the child's use of the internet to ensure that they are not accessing inappropriate material.</p>	
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's homes overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This particularly refers to ensuring that the staff provide nurturing and consistent care to the child.</p>	<p>28/09/2020</p>
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken in to account and give the child reasons for decisions made in relation to the child.</p> <p>(Regulation 7 (1)(c)(2)(a)(iii))</p>	<p>28/09/2020</p>
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being;</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>28/09/2020</p>

In particular, ensure that children eat a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet.	
<p>The positive relationships standard is that—</p> <p>children are helped to develop and to benefit from relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v))</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>communicate to each child consistent expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands these expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff meet each child's behaviour and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans and that these plans are kept up to date;</p>	28/09/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1277304

Registered provider: Keys Group

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Second Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Guy Mammatt

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tina Maddison, Social Care Inspector

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