

1224093

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to four children who have complex needs and require specialist support. The registered manager left the home on 31 January 2020. A new manager has been appointed and has a registration application in progress with Ofsted.

**Visit dates:** 5 to 6 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 17 June 2019

**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 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 children feel happy and supported by the staff. All the children continued to access education and activities during lockdown. These activities have included quizzes, word search nights and physical activities, such as cycling and trampolining. The staff have been creative in developing opportunities for the children to learn and build positive relationships with each other.

The staff ensure that children's transitions are well planned. The staff have supported children to develop skills in self-care, budgeting and cooking. This helps to prepare them for their next steps towards adulthood.

The staff ensured that the children continued to keep in touch with their families during lockdown. Staff regularly take the children to visit their families regardless of the length of travel involved. The staff have ensured that a child was able to promptly visit a family member who was unwell. These visits are important to and valued by the children.

Children's bedrooms are well personalised. A chalk wall in each child's bedroom enables the children to express themselves and to express their individuality.

The manager has decorated some parts of the house. However, the maintenance schedule has been delayed significantly by the lockdown restrictions. Several areas of the home require maintenance repairs. One of the bathrooms has mould on the walls, some parts of the flooring need repair and corridor walls need redecorating. In addition, some of the furniture is worn. This means that the home does not feel comfortable and welcoming.

## **The safety of children**

The children's individual risk assessments lack detail. Therefore, staff do not have clear and practical guidance on how to reduce specific behaviours. The staff have not reviewed the strategies in line with the children's current risks. This could reduce the effectiveness of the staff's response.

Safeguarding matters have not always been managed appropriately. For example, following an allegation about a member of staff, the manager failed to take immediate action. The manager later resolved the issue. However, this delay meant that she did not follow the home's safeguarding policy.

There has been a significant reduction in episodes of children going missing from the home and the use of physical restraints. This is because the staff praise positive behaviours and encourage the children to make good choices. The staff talk to children following a negative incident and record the children's views. This encourages children to learn from behavioural incidents.

Staff understand internet safety. They have managed increased internet use well during lockdown. The manager has changed internet providers so that full parental controls can be used on different devices. The staff have undertaken key-work sessions to support children's understanding of the risks and how to keep themselves safer online.

### **Leaders and managers**

A new manager has been appointed since the last inspection. She has begun to make improvements. However, some of the identified shortfalls from the last inspection remain and have been raised again.

The manager has recruited a new staff team and no longer uses agency staff. However, the new staff have limited childcare knowledge and do not know the children well. Consequently, the children do not benefit from consistent and stable care.

Children's records are not all up to date. They are not informative of children's progress or the recent changes in the children's lives. A child's care plan had not been reviewed following a new medical diagnosis. Therefore, staff did not consider strategies and support available in the child's education and behaviour plans. This means that the child could miss out on specialist resources that can support his learning and behaviours.

The manager has undertaken regular planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and regularly updates the staff with the most recent developments. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them well.

The manager's partnership working is strong. The manager has fortnightly consultation meetings with therapists who work with the home. Staff work closely with children's families and social workers. Social workers reported positive change since the new manager has been in post. They receive regular updates from the home about the children's progress.

The manager uses monitoring and reviewing processes to assess the effectiveness of the home. She uses external reviews and regular feedback from the children and staff. This means that the manager has an informed view of the strengths of the home. She also understands the current areas of weakness and has plans to continue making improvements.

## 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—</p> <p>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 any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	16/11/2020
<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 aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <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 the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2(a)(e)))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the staff team is stable and consistent.</p>	14/12/2020
<p>The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p>	16/11/2020

include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;

and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))

In particular, ensure that records are current, accurate and written in a professional manner.

## Recommendations

- Provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)  
In particular, maintain the communal areas to a good standard.
- Ensure that any allegation of harm or abuse is addressed in line with the home's child protection policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17)  
In particular, act in accordance with the home's safeguarding policy.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1224093

**Registered provider:** Keys BR Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2nd Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen, Worcestershire B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** Zoe Tompkins

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector  
Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020