

# SC028174

Registered provider: Keys Direct Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large national provider. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced and was present throughout this inspection.

Children were seen and their views have contributed to this report.

### Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 July 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/07/2022	Full	Good
07/09/2021	Full	Good
03/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/07/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

The home was closed for a period to allow for refurbishment and reopened in July 2023. The home has benefited from this refurbishment and provides children with a homely and cosy environment. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual taste and children have been consulted with about the decor of the home.

Three children have moved in since it reopened, and they remain living in the home. There has been a high turnover of staff recently and this has had an impact on consistency and stability of the home. Children are being cared for by a variety of agency staff or staff from other homes. This limits opportunities for children to form secure relationships with all the adults caring for them. Children do have positive and trusting relationships with the core staff team and could identify who they would speak to if they needed help and support.

All the children have access to external education provisions and achievements are celebrated, but their attendance and attainment are too varied. Children who refuse to attend school, or have been temporarily excluded, are not provided with structure and routines that would support them to engage in education. The manager is not working constructively with schools to ensure that children are provided with suitable work to complete at home. This means children are not provided with an environment where the benefit and expectations of education are promoted.

Children are supported to maintain contact with people who are important to them. They are being helped to improve their relationships with each other and this has led to a reduction in disruptive incidents. Children are offered a range of activities in the home and community, which supports them to develop friendships.

Children who have moved into the home have had a positive experience. Staff visited the children and consulted with them about their likes and dislikes and sent them welcome letters. As a result, children have settled well and feel safe and cared for.

Children's plans are not regularly reviewed and updated and do not consistently reflect the children's individual needs. Some information does not correlate across the plans and is contradictory. This makes it difficult for new or temporary staff to easily access important information about the children.

Professionals consulted with were positive about the home and the care that children receive, although the home was described as being 'chaotic' and there being an overreliance on using the out-of-hours service to report minor concerns.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

There has been a high level of incidents, although these have recently started to reduce. Staff have not consistently been able to manage and intervene during incidents to prevent them from escalating. Children have at times struggled to manage their relationships with each other but are being supported to improve these.

Children's risk assessments and specific plans, such as missing-from-care protocols and behaviour support plans, do not always contain all the relevant information, and are not regularly reviewed and updated in response to incidents or events. They do not always reflect children's needs and experiences. Staff are not given clear guidance on what to do if a child goes missing from the home. This means that staff may not understand how best to support children who may be in a crisis or at risk.

Relevant checks to ensure the suitability of agency staff working in the home have not been fully completed in line with safe recruitment practices.

Children are supported with their emotional well-being and as a result there has been a reduction in self-injurious behaviours. The ligature risk assessment does not contain sufficient information. One child has made good progress in this area since moving in and harm has reduced. Staff have received relevant training to improve their knowledge and skills.

Incidents that require the use of physical restraint are rare. When they do occur, the manager provides evaluation and reflection, and staff and children are debriefed to gather their views and feelings. Behaviour support plans do not contain sufficient detail about the most appropriate ways to support children in a crisis, and do not reflect children's individual needs.

There have been several allegations about staff made by children. These have been well managed, and the manager has worked effectively with external safeguarding professionals. Children know how to complain and are supported when they do. The manager has had clear oversight of complaints and has provided outcomes and feedback to children. This provides children with a clear voice in the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager is passionate about her role and is child-centred in her approach. She is a positive role model to the staff and demonstrates warm and nurturing care to the children. There has been instability within the team, which has led to a high staff turnover. There have been concerns about low staff morale and this has impacted on team dynamics and positive relationships within the staff team. The manager has regularly undertaken shifts to cover shortfalls in staffing. This has impacted on her oversight of the home and completion of management tasks.

There are shortfalls in the manager's evaluation of incidents and the updating of key documents in response. One significant incident relating to a child receiving injuries during a restraint at school has led to an external investigation by police and safeguarding professionals. This was not reported to the regulator, and this has prevented oversight and scrutiny. The manager could not provide an update regarding the progress of this investigation, as information from external agencies had not been shared with her.

Staff have regular, reflective supervision sessions and this provides opportunities to reflect on practice and development. There is a wide range of mandatory and additional training available to staff and this has supported with developing their knowledge and skills. Staff are supported by a clinical team whose members provide additional workshops and consultation to help staff understand the specific needs of children. Most of the staff are new to the home and do not yet have the relevant childcare qualification but are enrolled on this course. Not all staff have completed the mandatory fire awareness training, which could place staff and children at risk of harm.

Handovers are completed daily; however, important tasks are not being carried out in a timely way. For example, vehicle faults were identified for both of the provider's cars that would require specialist advice, and these were out for repair for five consecutive days. Ofsted could not be assured that the vehicles were safe, and action was taken by the manager during the inspection to rectify this and seek professional advice.

Handovers do not routinely provide staff with clear guidance or expectations of them as to what support children may need. For example, staff are not provided with education timetables or work to support the children to participate in educational activities when not attending external schools. This means children are not provided with consistent routines and staff are not given advice on how best to engage them in education.

## 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, 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
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vi)(viii))</p>	1 March 2024
<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—</p> <p>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;</p>	1 March 2024

<p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that children's behaviour support plans and risk management documents accurately reflect the children's individual needs as well as being regularly reviewed. This also relates to ensuring that health and safety concerns are responded to in a timely way.</p>	
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to improving management oversight of the home.</p>	<p>1 March 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the safe recruitment of agency staff employed to work in the home.</p>	<p>2 February 2024</p>

<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i))</p>	<p>2 February 2024</p>
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## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children's records are kept up to date. This includes the local authority care plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that each child's needs, experiences and strengths are recognised and considered in behaviour management plans, with children involved, wherever practical, in this planning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.35)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.



## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC028174

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Direct Care Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Emma Hemmings

**Registered manager:** Sarah Simington

## Inspectors

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector  
Chris Haines, Social Care Inspector

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