

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Unique reference number	1242216
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bettercare Keys Limited
Registered provider address	The Keys Group, Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Heather Laffin
Registered manager	Holly Robertson
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

1242216

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The registered manager and staff have failed to fully engage and challenge external agencies. This has meant a lack of coordinated responses from professionals to keep a young person safe.
- Damage to the home has not been repaired in a timely manner. This means that children and young people have a constant reminder of the trauma that they experienced when damaging the environment.
- A fire door does not shut properly and therefore will be ineffective if a fire started.
- Staff do not fully recognise the signs of sexual exploitation. This has meant that staff have been slow to respond to potentially risky situations.
- Medication that is used for extreme allergic reactions was found to be past its expiry date. Staff have not received training on how to use this specialist medication and, therefore, would not be able to administer it in an emergency.
- Staff have not attended to a faulty lock on the office door. This may have been a factor in a large sum of money going missing from the office.
- Recordings of physical interventions have not included how the young person felt about the incident.
- The registered manager has responded well to the identified shortfalls and has immediately started to address them.
- Staff know and understand the children and young people well. They are able to build and maintain trusted and secure relationships. This means that children and young people feel safe and are able to generally make progress.
- The voice of the child is important to staff. Children and young people are encouraged to have their say about their care and their future. Staff listen and act on what children and young people say.
- Staff respond therapeutically to poor behaviour exhibited by children and young people. This helps them to manage their feelings and frustrations positively.
- A child who is responding well to the care and support provided said that he would judge the home as 'good'.

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) meets 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
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; and (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.	30/11/2016
6. The quality and purpose of care standard (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child. In particular, ensure that when damage is done to the home and maintenance is required, this is completed in a timely manner.	30/11/2016
Ensure that the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. This specifically applies to ensuring that fire doors close properly. (Regulation 25 (2)(a))	30/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate that a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- Ensure that there are suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The locking of external doors, or doors to hazardous materials, may be acceptable as a security precaution if applied within the normal routine of the home. This particularly applies to the office door, which was left unsecured. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.62)
- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint (Regulation 35 (3)(c)). Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.62)

Full report

Information about this children's home

Staff and children recently moved from another registered home when the lease on the property expired. The new home has been recently registered and this is the first inspection in the new home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children or young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is privately owned and part of a large organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A	N/A	N/A

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Several areas have been identified that require improvement in this home for it to be good. Children and young people have damaged the environment, particularly the walls. This has left walls bare and with the damage easily seen. Repairs have been very slow and no one has made an effort to cover over the damage until repairs can be carried out. This means that children and young people are constantly reminded of the trauma that they were going through at the time that they inflicted the damage. There is very little medication used at this home. However, prescribed medication that is used to relieve severe allergic reactions was found to be out of date. Furthermore, staff have not been trained in how to use this specialist medication. Staff have not recognised the signs of possible child sexual exploitation when these have been presented. This has led to a slow response from staff in referring to the appropriate agencies. However, staff have nurturing and trusting relationships with children and young people. Children and young people will talk to staff about their feelings and concerns. An independent reviewing officer said of a member of staff, 'He is very child-centred and focused on the child's needs.' Staff know the children and young people well. This enables them to generally provide good care for them. One young person continues to put himself in risky situations when he goes missing. This is due to his current family circumstances rather than the quality of relationships that he has with the staff team. The therapeutic approach that staff utilise has a positive impact on children and young people. Children and young people generally make progress, particularly with regards to education and managing their behaviour. Since moving to the new home, the children and young people have struggled to behave positively. One child is now starting to make good progress again. He is consistently attending school and doing well. The headteacher welcomes the support that staff give to the child throughout the school day and says that he is making 'exceptional progress at school'. External professionals talked about the significant progress that children and young people make from their starting points. For example, an independent reviewing officer said, 'In his previous placement, they struggled with his behaviours and violence. Since being here, they have put in the right incentives to get him to school.' He is now managing his behaviour better and is responding well to staff. The voice of the child is important to staff. They encourage children and young people to make decisions and choices on a daily basis, especially around their care and their futures. An independent reviewing officer said, 'He [member of staff] has been the consistent person that has attended all of his statutory reviews. The unit has recognised that he [a member of staff] has become a key person in the child's	

life. Therefore, they have listened to the child.' Professionals all agreed that the voice of the child is well promoted in this home.

Children and young people benefit from maintaining positive contact with their families, where this is appropriate. Staff facilitate and support contact with families. An independent reviewing officer said, 'They seem tuned into sensitivities around family contact.'

Children and young people have access to appropriate healthcare professionals including mental health services. When children and young people refuse to attend healthcare appointments, staff talk to them to help them to understand the importance of attending. A therapist regularly visits the home to provide staff with strategies to therapeutically manage children's and young people's behaviours. Staff fully appreciate this approach, and have said that it has aided the progress that children and young people have made.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Family circumstances have impacted negatively on one young person who has begun to go missing for prolonged periods of time. When the young person has been found, he has been left in police custody for some time while staff and the police negotiate on who will collect him. The police missing person's coordinator said, 'I have been advised that staff in the home would not be in a position to collect the young person due to insufficient cover.' This is contrary to the home's policy and staff should have been able to collect the young person. Furthermore, the registered manager has not liaised with the local police or the police in the area where the young person runs to and therefore, they have not agreed a suitable protocol to ensure that everyone knows what the expectations are. However, children and young people generally do not go missing from this home. This is because staff have warm and supportive relationships with children and young people that help them to feel safe and secure. Staff have not attended to a faulty lock on the office door. This may have been a factor in a large sum of money going missing from the office. A fire door between the kitchen and laundry room does not shut properly. This means that staff and children are not appropriately protected if a fire should start. Staff employ therapeutic behaviour management strategies that have a positive impact on the children and young people. When incidents of poor behaviour happen, the staff do not automatically call the police, as they try to do everything that they can not to criminalise children and young people. Staff are trained in physical intervention and they also have effective de-escalation skills. Occasionally, staff have had to use physical intervention, but only as a last resort. Each time a physical intervention has taken place, it appears to have been carried out appropriately. Records are completed following the interventions but they fail to record the child's feelings about the incident. The registered manager	

provides good oversight and feels assured that this is a recording error only, but a recommendation has been made to ensure that records reflect the actions that have taken place. The positive relationship between the staff, children and young people means that children and young people are confident to talk about their feelings.

Children and young people who take illegal substances and drink alcohol are offered appropriate support from staff and external agencies.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The recently registered manager is not yet qualified but is taking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare and expects to complete this within timescales. Staff feel well supported by her both formally through regular staff supervision and informally. The registered manager has failed to challenge a placing authority after a vulnerable young person made a disclosure and appropriate procedures were not followed. This means that there has not been a coordinated response and the young person has continued to put himself in risky situations. During the inspection, appropriate action was taken and a strategy meeting organised. Staff have not fully recognised or acted on the signs that a young person may be subject to child sexual exploitation. This means that staff have been slow to make a referral to the appropriate safeguarding agencies to enable a multi-agency plan to be formulated to ensure the safety of the young person. Repairs to the home are slow. For example, a child complained that the light was not working in a bathroom and the blind was broken, which meant it was constantly dark in the room. He also complained that mould was growing on the ceiling of the bathroom and he is concerned it may creep through to his bedroom. All these concerns were addressed during the inspection but had been left prior to this. Most staff members are new to the home, having just completed their probation period. Only two staff members are currently qualified with another two staff members due to complete their qualification in the near future. Nevertheless, staff present as knowledgeable, caring and motivated to provide good care for children and young people. The registered manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses among the staff team and is developing the team through training, support and guidance. The registered manager has responded well to the shortfalls identified within this inspection. For example, a placing authority was immediately challenged during the inspection to ensure a coordinated response to help keep a young person safe. The registered manager receives good support from her line manager who will continue to support the development of the registered manager's skills and confidence.	

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 looked after children 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 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 who 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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