

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC026991
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Keys Childcare Ltd
Registered person address	Laganwood House 44 New Forge Lane Belfast BT9 5NW
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	23/07/2014

Inspection date	04/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

The home appointed a new manager in January 2014. She was formerly the deputy of the home and has just submitted an application to register as the manager with Ofsted. The manager acknowledges there was a delay in her application while awaiting her Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check.

Three members of staff have left the home in the last few weeks to pursue alternative careers. Staff from other homes in the organisation who are known to the young people are providing additional support while new staff are recruited. This does not appear at this time to have had a detrimental effect upon the care provided to the young people. The recruitment and vetting procedures have improved. This is because staff files now contain all of the required information, such as copies of their qualifications certificates.

The home has addressed the issues raised as a result of the last inspection. The home is more secure due to the repairs to the perimeter fencing and the installation of the new gates. Some maintenance work has been undertaken and young people have been actively involved in choosing the new colour schemes. This has created a brighter and more homely environment in the lounge. However, this is not the case throughout the home as some young people's bedrooms and some carpets are looking tired and worn. These issues detract from the homely environment staff are striving to achieve. Also the locks on bathroom doors are not able to be opened from the outside. This means staff cannot gain immediate access should a young person lock themselves in or need support from staff.

Young people are pleased that they now have access to a private telephone in the home and are beginning to take advantage of this. Staff said some young people continue to prefer to use the office phone, but it is good that they now have a choice to talk to friends and family in private.

Consultation with young people has improved and they now have a greater say in what happens within the home and their care. For example, young people have asked that staff are made aware that sometimes they need to go to their room and shout, so that they can 'get their mad out.' This means young people are more able to manage their feelings in a constructive manner.

Staff effectively use the young people's own language in their records to describe their feelings, such as 'I flip.' Staff then provide additional information to the reader as to what this means in practice. This means young people have control over what is written about them and are able to contribute to the plans created to support them.

Young people have been instrumental in establishing the house rules and the consequences for not following them. This means young people have a strong sense of ownership and are confident to challenge any situations which they feel are unfair. For example, talking to staff about what constitutes an appropriate snack afterschool. They then feel confident to challenge staff with what they perceive to be an inequality. For example, explaining why it is not fair that another young person has made an inappropriate snack for themselves.

Records and documentation are well maintained and are enhanced as current paperwork from local authorities is in place for each young person. This means staff are more able to plan effectively for each young person's day-to-day care. However, some of the recording of consequences do not show the time the problem occurred and do not clearly reflect what happened. This does not help staff to reflect upon the situation and learn from the incident. This has not been picked up in the manager's monitoring of the records.

The manager's monitoring of the home is generally sound. For example, the manager identifies where additional information is needed or a document should be update. This is not reflected within their monitoring reports and does not promote transparency or indicate how the home is moving forward. Reports by the independent person are now received by Ofsted every month. These reports generally cover all of the required areas but in recent months have lacked any comments from young people and family members. This means the independent person is missing out on valuable information that will aid their assessment of the service.

Staff are sound advocates for young people. The manager confidently challenges other professionals to ensure young people receive the right support. For example, they work in partnership with schools and social workers to secure the most appropriate educational placement for young people. Young people's education is well supported and they are all encouraged to complete their homework when they come home from school. They enjoy friendly, appropriate banter with staff.

Young people enjoy a range of activities throughout the week. They attend rugby clubs and cadets. Some young people have attended camps with the cadets, something they had not previously experienced. Staff said they were very tired when they returned, but this was a very valuable experience for them which has increased their confidence and self-esteem.

Information about this children's home

The service is run by an established private provider. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with attachment disorders.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/07/2014	Full	adequate
31/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
20/09/2013	Full	good
10/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person carrying out the monitoring visit of the home shall and with their consent talk to the children accommodated , their parents, and relatives in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	10/04/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure entries in records are clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish as far as possible fact, opinion and third party information in

particular the consequences book (NMS 22.4)

- enhance further the monitoring by the manager in particular reports are evaluative and identify and patterns, trends, shortfalls such as times of consequences not being recorded and the action taken to rectify this (NMS21.2)
- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated in particular some young people bedrooms, worn carpets and the locks on bathroom doors (NMS 10.3)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.