

Inspection report for children's home

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC034944        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Mandy Williams  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registered person</b>         | Keys Childcare Ltd                                   |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | Laganwood House 44 New Forge Lane Belfast<br>BT9 5NW |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>    | Heather Ann Laffin                                   |
| <b>Registered manager</b>        | Donna Louise Miller                                  |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b>   | 06/03/2014                                           |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 02/10/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

|                                          |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Previous inspection                      | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | none          |

|                                        |                 |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>This inspection</b>                 |                 |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>           | <b>adequate</b> |
| Outcomes for children and young people | good            |
| Quality of care                        | good            |
| Keeping children and young people safe | adequate        |
| Leadership and management              | adequate        |

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>adequate</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------|

Young people living in the home benefit from being cared for in a structured but nurturing environment. They have positive relationships with staff and enjoy spending time with them. Young people receive a consistency of care and a predictable response from adults. This enables young people to develop trust in those caring for them and improve their emotional resilience. Young people say that they are happy living in the home and that they feel safe here.

Young people largely demonstrate respectful relationships with staff and each other. Social workers involved with the home are pleased with the progress that young people are making and are complimentary about the care that young people receive.

Young people benefit from personalised placement plans that are of good quality. They are making good progress across all areas of their development. Young people's attendance and progress at school is also good and well supported by staff. Young people's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated.

A new manager is in place in the home. She is familiar with staff and most young people, as she was the former deputy manager of the home. She demonstrates enthusiasm to address the shortfalls identified at this inspection, some relating to practice prior to her taking up her current post.

Four requirements and five good practice recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection. Many of these relate to the internal monitoring of the home; review of procedures and evaluation of records. They have not had a negative impact on the positive outcomes for young people.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people. The children and young people may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, including attachment problems.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 06/03/2014      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 12/12/2013      | Full            | good                 |
| 04/03/2013      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 05/10/2012      | Full            | good                 |

### 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   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5 (2001)  | ensure that the HMCI is notified of any revision of the Statement of Purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5(b))                                                                                             | 31/10/2014 |
| 16 (2001) | ensure that the home engages in consultation and takes into account the views of other bodies in reviewing their missing child policy (Regulation 16 (5)(i))                                              | 31/10/2014 |
| 29 (2001) | ensure that the home keeps all records specified under Schedule 4; specifically that the duty roster worked includes the full names of staff on duty; that this corresponds with other records maintained | 31/10/2014 |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|              | in the home; and that the roster is legible without numerous alterations (Regulation 29(1))                                                                                            |            |
| 34<br>(2001) | ensure that the system established to monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 are effective; particularly that they accurately reflect the situation in the home. (Regulation 34(1)) | 31/10/2014 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that the system established to review incidents of challenging behaviour examines trends or issues emerging from this; is kept up-to-date; and enables staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. This is to include incidents of bullying and when incidents have led to physical restraint being utilised (NMS 3.21)
- ensure that the home consistently follows good recruitment practice; in particular that references are sought when the individual has worked with children and young people in a voluntary capacity; and that the original copy of the applicants DBS check is viewed (NMS 16.2)
- ensure that the overall number of staff on individual shifts can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the needs of all children resident in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that the staff disciplinary procedure in place is clearly followed by staff; in particular that previous disciplinary matters are acknowledged and taken into account (NMS 17.7)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home; this is in relation to staff signing the consultancy meeting minutes held with children's therapists so that the manager can ensure that all staff are familiar with pertinent issues for young people. (NMS 21.1)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people living in the home make good progress across all areas of their development. Prior to moving to the home, many young people have experienced disruption to their care, resulting in attachment difficulties. The home provides a nurturing environment where young people can learn to trust adults. All the young people living in the home have lived here for over 12 months. They know the staff and each other well. This period of stability ensures that young people's needs are clearly assessed and understood prior to making plans for their long term care. Since the last inspection, some young people have learnt to manage their emotions and have successfully moved on from the home to foster care as a result.

Young people enjoy good health. They do not engage in risk taking behaviours such as smoking or drug and alcohol misuse. They receive encouragement to eat a healthy diet and follow a healthy lifestyle. Young people are involved in a range of physical activities that helps keep them fit. One young person recently participated in a five kilometre run, along with a staff member, and was rightly proud of his achievement. Young people are also encouraged to follow good personal hygiene routines. They receive daily incentives to encourage their participation if they are struggling to engage with this. Staff hope that young people will establish healthy routines while living at the home that they will be able to continue when they move on from here.

Young people's emotional health needs are also met. All young people access therapeutic support within the organisation. This helps young people develop an understanding of their past and appreciate how these experiences may be affecting their presentation and behaviour. The organisation's shared terminology ensures that young people receive consistent messages. The therapeutic team are also actively involved in young people's transitions, so that these are carefully managed to maximise the chance of success.

All young people attend school regularly. Some young people attend the organisation's school, while others attend mainstream establishments. Regular channels of communication are established between home and school. Young people's progress is celebrated by the presentation of a certificate or a treat. Young people are making good educational progress. However, an up-to-date personal education plan (PEP) was not available in the home for all young people. Thus, making it difficult for staff in the home to engage young people in meeting their educational targets.

Young people benefit from regular and appropriate contact with their family and friends. Staff demonstrate flexibility when arranging contact in order for the arrangements to reflect the needs of the young people. This sometimes involves careful planning and long distance travel. One social worker commented, 'Staff have

been really good with contact and have done over and above what would usually be expected'.

Young people are gently and effectively prepared for independent living, in line with their age and understanding. They are encouraged to help make the tea, tidy their bedroom or assist staff with the weekly shopping.

### **Quality of care**

**good**

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and they talk about them warmly. One young person said, 'I really like the people who look after me' and another said, 'If anything, living here gets better and better'. Young people are able to talk about the particular strengths of each staff member. For example, who is the best cook or fun to play football with. Young people respond well to the clear and consistent boundaries provided by staff, while living in a nurturing and supportive environment. Although some staff have worked in the home for a long time there have been some staff changes over recent months, including the departure of the Registered Manager, who was very visible to the young people in the home. Some young people have struggled with these changes, although they are now developing positive relationships with the new staff in the home.

Social workers talk positively about the staff in the home. One commented, 'The staff are great. They are very child centred and their communication with me is good.' Social workers express confidence in the home working in partnerships with themselves and young people's families.

Individualised placement plans are in place for all young people. The young people are able to participate in their care planning, contributing their own thoughts and views. These plans are subject to regular review to ensure that they continue to be targeted on improving outcomes for the young person. There is a system in place to ensure that all staff working in the home are familiar with the placement plans. Thus, ensuring that all those working with young people are in agreement and that their objectives are clear.

Young people's views are taken into consideration and help inform the running of the home. Staff consult with young people informally on a daily basis as well as in more structured young people's meetings. Young people's individuality is respected. Young people are well presented in clothing that reflects their personality and interests. They are encouraged to take pride in their appearance. Similarly, young people's bedrooms are personalised in colours and themes of their choosing. These things help young people feel that they belong in the home and that their views are important.

Young people understand how to make a complaint and they have done so on occasion. Young people receive a 'children's guide to making a complaint' on their

admission to the home which clearly outlines who they should approach and what the process entails. Young people also receive feedback to any issue that they have brought to the attention of staff. Thus, that they are aware that it has been taken seriously and what actions have been taken.

Staff promote young people's attendance in education. They ensure that young people arrive at school on time; are well presented and have the equipment that they require. Staff are in regular communication with young people's schools to ensure that they are aware of any pertinent issues within the school setting.

The home is located in a residential area and is indistinguishable to other family homes. It is well maintained and is warm and welcoming. Photographs of young people are also in display in the home. The location also allows for young people to access a range of suitable leisure activities that are available in the community. Young people report that one of the best things about the home, 'is all the things that they get to do'. Staff encourage the participation of young people as this helps improve their confidence and self-esteem.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    adequate**

Young people say that they feel safe living in the home. Staff complete both group work and individual work with young people about how to keep themselves safe. For example, internet safety and bullying. Incidents of bullying are infrequent, but when they do occur staff undertake work with young people to help them gain an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others. However, a system is not in place to effectively monitor the effectiveness of the response.

Young people do not go missing from the home. The home has a procedure in place should they do so and staff are familiar with locally agreed protocols. However, the home's procedures have not been agreed by the police to ensure their compatibility. The Registered Manager has recently completed a safe area risk assessment. Hence, staff are aware of the potential risks for young people in the local community and are able to put additional measure in place to support them if necessary.

Staff are trained in positive behaviour management. This includes the use of physical restraint, so that they are able to intervene safely if required. Staff also receive regular update training to ensure that they remain confident in their skills. Young people benefit from individualised behaviour management plans, which identify the most appropriate way for staff to manage their behaviours with the minimum degree of intervention. While the number of incidents of restraint has reduced over time for some young people, for others they have increased. Staff monitor these in a graph format so that young people's progress can be monitored. However, these are not kept up-to-date which resulting in insufficient evaluation to ensure there are effective strategies to break negative cycles and inform future practice.

Staff recruitment and selection processes are largely sound. Appropriate checks are completed and records maintained. References are sought from previous employers and verified. However, a reference is not always requested when an individual has worked in a voluntary capacity with young people. Clearance is requested for all employees from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and these are regularly updated. However, following the introduction of a new system of certification by the DBS, individuals are requested to forward a photocopy of their clearance to the organisation's human resources department. The original certificate is not checked by the organisation or the Registered Manager.

All staff are trained in safeguarding as part of their induction to the home and this is regularly updated. There is also good communication between the manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Any allegations made by young people are duly investigated and they are informed about the outcome. Staff disciplinary procedures are initiated if they are required. However, it is not always evident that previous concerns and actions have been taken into account in subsequent investigations. This does not fully demonstrate that the organisation has considered any emerging patterns and trends to ensure that children are fully safeguarded.

Young people live in an environment that is physically safe, as regular safety checks and environmental risk assessments are in place. Regular fire drills ensure that young people and staff know how to evacuate the building safely. Visitors to the home are required to produce identification on entering the property and the fire evacuation procedures are explained to them. These processes ensure the safety of individuals on the premises.

## **Leadership and management**

## **adequate**

There is a new manager in charge of the home. She successfully completed the Ofsted registration process during this inspection. The home was without a permanent manager for a number of weeks but the new manager has been in post for the last two months. She has experience of managing another home in the organisation and was previously a deputy manager at this home, so has established relationships with some staff and young people. She has the appropriate child care and management qualifications.

Staff receive regular supervision and an annual performance appraisal. This allows them the opportunity to review their performance and consider their future learning objectives. A range of training opportunities are available to staff and they express confidence in the manager pursuing their individual requests. Staff working in the home either have a level three qualification in caring for children and young people; are in the process of working towards this; or have yet to complete their probationary period. The manager has a training matrix in place to assist her in monitoring staff training and to alert her when refresher training is required.

Consequently, staff are equipped with the skills they require to meet the needs of the young people that they are caring for effectively.

The home's Statement of Purpose has been recently revised but a copy has not been forwarded to Ofsted as required. This outlines the aims and objectives of the home. However, during the inspection it became evident that the home does not always operate in accordance with this, as insufficient staff were on duty in the home on one specific occasion. Additionally, staff who were on duty had been transferred from another home and although known to the young people, they did not benefit from an established relationship. Some staff rotas were also difficult to follow due to numerous alterations. In addition, they did not always contain the full names of staff on duty and the hours worked did not always correlate with other records maintained in the home.

No requirements or recommendations were raised at the last interim inspection of the home. The new manager does have a development plan in place and has been keen to introduce to the home initiatives that she has found to be effective previously. For example, an induction pack for new staff highlighting all the documents they need to be familiar with as well as a glossary of commonly used abbreviations. She has a commitment to this home and demonstrates a keen desire to address the identified shortfalls.

The internal and external monitoring of the home is completed regularly and forwarded to Ofsted as required. However, reports on the internal monitoring of the home, completed prior to the arrival of the current manager, have not been robust. Inaccuracies in this monitoring included: confirmation that documents were in place that could not be located, such as a young person's PEP; errors in staffing information; and poor monitoring of incidents and evaluation.

Staff meetings take place regularly to ensure that staff have the opportunity to contribute their views and share any updates on young people. Staff also have regular opportunities to consult with therapists working with young people. This ensures that staff are aware of the therapeutic progress that young people are making and allows them to seek guidance on how to address any pertinent issues for young people. However, staff do not always sign consultancy meeting minutes held with children's therapists. This does not ensure that all staff are familiar with pertinent issues for young people, limiting the effectiveness of this process.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Judgement   | Description                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding | A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Good        | A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.                      |
| Adequate    | A service that only meets minimum requirements.                                   |
| Inadequate  | A service that does not meet minimum requirements.                                |

## 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.