

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC063997
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered person address	Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Nicola Simmonds
Registered manager	Amanda Williams
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged Requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. The previous full inspection identified a number of shortfalls resulting in a total of six requirements and seven recommendations being made. These have all been addressed and met. This has resulted in improved outcomes and care for young people, provided by a more experienced and stable staff team. Young people make good progress in their education given their starting points and are on course to attain qualifications expected of their age group. For one young person, who has recently moved on from the home, their school attendance dramatically increased from only being able to spend ten minutes in class to eventually attending full time. Young people experience a range of activities that they had not previously been able to enjoy. These include fishing, camping and ice-skating. Appropriate friendships are encouraged, with friends coming to the home for visits. The social skills of young people improve as a result. They are encouraged to contribute to the operation of the home by attending regular house meetings and to contribute to the community by participating in charitable events. This improves their relationships within the home and in the community. The health of young people continues to improve, especially in relation to smoking and drug use, which, for one young person, has decreased significantly since moving into this home. Young people increasingly become independent, learning new skills that will help them as they move on from the home. Some young people look after hamsters, giving them a sense of responsibility and the opportunity to learn skills in caring for animals. Good care is now provided by a strong and stable staff team. Additional staff have been recruited and all staff benefit from a good range of training that is appropriate to the needs of the young people. Supervision has improved for all staff, and those responsible for leading a shift benefit from robust training ensuring they provide good leadership. A revision of shift patterns ensures staff do not work excessive hours. There has been no use of agency staff since July last year,	

providing consistency for the young people and helping them to build effective relationships with the adults who care for them.

Relationships within the home are good. This is because staff work hard to create a warm and nurturing environment that provides a balance between caring and promoting independence. One young person said: 'The best thing is here they treat me like an adult, more than anywhere else I have been.'

Young people move on from the home in a planned way that has enabled successful transition. One young person has been able to return to the family home because they were able to build up contact in a planned way, culminating in overnight stays and a return home.

Young people are increasingly safe and protected because of living here. The risk of sexual exploitation is continuously decreasing because staff work closely with a number of agencies, sharing appropriate information to keep young people safe. In addition, good key work enables staff to have discussions with young people about the risks and how to maintain their own safety. Missing episodes have massively decreased. This is because young people have settled, made appropriate friendships, understand the boundaries and know how to keep themselves safe. The registered manager reviews any incidents of absence and ensures any patterns of behaviour are discussed to prevent future incidents occurring. Where required, return interviews are carried out by various independent agencies ensuring any reasons for absence is explored. Where there is any delay in these interviews taking place the manager effectively challenges the agency responsible to ensure young people remain as safe as possible. Staff are aware of what to do in the event of any allegation or concern and have a good relationship with the local designated safeguarding officer, who is able to provide advice and support. This ensures young people are protected.

The registered manager has reviewed the office and administrative practices resulting in a more organised system promoting improved recording. This has been further enhanced by team training in recording and reporting. This ensures that there are good quality records that reflect what is happening in the home and are more accessible for young people.

In addition to addressing the shortfalls identified previously, the registered manager continues to make further improvements. She is driven and motivated to make changes and utilises a range of monitoring tools to help her assess where improvement is needed. She has improved procedures for the use of temporary staff in the event of them being required to cover any staffing shortfalls. This ensures they are suitable for working in this home. She has improved measures for protecting young people from the dangers of the internet and social media. These are constantly reviewed to ensure there is an effective balance between keeping young people safe and increasing their independence and levels of trust.

Young people are increasingly involved in staff development. They contribute to

staff annual appraisals and provide regular feedback by using 'wow cards.' These highlight everyday achievements of staff and provide positive comments about them. For example, one 'wow card' read, 'he made a really nice stew today.' This system is also used to highlight the progress and achievements young people make. This promotes their confidence and increases their self-esteem, encouraging them to continue to make progress.

No shortfalls were identified during this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides accommodation for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The provider organisation operates nationally, providing a range of care services for children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2015	Full	Requires Improvement
15/01/2015	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
16/07/2014	Full	Adequate
04/06/2014	Full	Inadequate

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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