

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC063997
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bettercare Keys Ltd
Registered provider address	Laganwood House, Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Nicola Simmonds
Registered manager	Amanda Williams
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	23/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. The responsible individual and other senior managers are currently undertaking an investigation into alleged safeguarding concerns in the home. These concerns were raised by one member of staff, but other staff working in the home at the time did not follow their whistleblowing procedure. This has the potential to leave young people vulnerable. Complaints made by young people are not robustly responded to. For example, a particularly vulnerable young person complained on two separate occasions that another young person made her feel unsafe. The responses were not sufficient to provide reassurance that she would be protected. Incidents of the nature that the young person was complaining about continued to occur after the second complaint. Furthermore, a number of complaints do not have a recorded outcome. It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the action taken was effective and whether the complainant was happy with the resolution. However, young people know how to make complaints and feel they can talk to staff if they are unhappy. A young person said: 'When you get upset, ask staff to talk to you. They will talk to you. There is no point in kicking off.' Medication is not safely managed. A young person's risk assessment, based on the risk of overdose, is not followed. This means that the young person is at risk of taking more than is prescribed. Staff are unable to locate some prescribed medication that has been given to a young person. Consequently, the young person has either taken too many tablets or has lost them. Care plans are not followed. One young person is given more medication than they are allowed, which enables them to stay away from the home for more nights than have been agreed in their contact plan. Medication records are confusing or not adequately completed. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not young people have taken their medication as prescribed. When young people are absent from the home and are in breach of their contact plan, staff do not record this separately. This makes it difficult to monitor the frequency of such absences and ensure that effective strategies are implemented.	

Maintenance issues are slow to be resolved. Staff say that this is because there are currently no maintenance staff assigned to the home and they have to rely on staff from other regions. This means that when things in the home are broken, they remain broken for some time. For example, a door handle to the lounge has not been working properly for three weeks and now has completely broken. Staff have removed the handle, leaving a hole in the door. This makes it difficult to exit the lounge using this door.

Nevertheless, young people say that they are generally happy and like living in this home. A young person said: 'It's like a home. It's homely. I get on with all the staff.' They enjoy a wide range of activities, such as trips to theme parks, walks, the cinema and bowling. They are attending school or college and are achieving. One young person took 11 GCSE exams last year. She is now at college and has good aspirations for her future.

Young people make good progress in their education, in working towards independence and in managing their own behaviour. Staff build strong, nurturing relationships with young people. A young person said: 'I've built up some special relationships and want to stay in touch when I leave.' Young people feel cared for. A young person spoke about what has gone well for her: 'They have made me more independent and I've grown up a bit. They gave me rules and boundaries. They've given me stability.'

Staff work closely with external agencies to ensure cohesive planning. A social worker said: 'Staff are fabulous and they keep me informed. They are extremely patient and bring the best out of [young people].'

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/06/2016	Full	Good
18/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/06/2015	Full	Requires improvement
15/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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) meet(s) 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
The protection of children standard 12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) 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; (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	14/04/2017
The care planning standard 14.—(1) The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (c) that each child's relevant plans are followed.	14/04/2017
Ensure there are effective arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	14/04/2017
Maintain records ('case records') for each child, which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. This is with specific reference to maintaining a log of	14/04/2017

incidents where children are absent without authority. (Regulation 36(1))	
Ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	14/04/2017

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 that 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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