

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC063997
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered provider address	Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Nicola Simmonds
Registered manager	Amanda Williams
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	29 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC063997

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff are nurturing, open and honest with young people. They provide skilled and competent child-centred care. They have trusting and secure relationships with young people.
- The registered manager provides strong, effective and supportive leadership. She understands the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has plans to address identified shortfalls.
- Staff work closely with other professionals to implement agreed proactive strategies to keep young people safe.
- Young people say they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, but struggle to identify risky situations and to extract themselves safely. Staff work across counties to help young people return safely when they have been missing from the home. Incidents of going missing for one young person, although not reducing, are significantly lower than in their previous placements.
- Young people make good progress in this home from their starting points. For example, one young person has just taken 11 GCSEs and another has significantly reduced the level of violence she has exhibited in other placements.

Full report

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
18 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15 June 2015	Full	Requires improvement
15 January 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16 July 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people benefit from a nurturing environment where they feel safe and able to make positive relationships. They make good progress from their starting points, particularly with their education, independence skills and risk-taking behaviours. A social worker said: 'She has done incredibly well since being here.' For example, one young person has just sat 11 GCSE exams. Young people benefit from the strong, trusting, nurturing relationships that they have with staff. An external professional said: 'I was very happy to see how relaxed she was with the staff and how much they care about her.' This helps young people to build secure attachments. A young person said: 'I like the staff. They just understand you. They sit there and listen to us. They're really understanding.' Another said: 'It just feels like my home.' Staff spend time getting to know the young people, listening to and understanding them. They challenge young people's views when an unsafe perspective is voiced. The health of young people is promoted. They are supported to attend all healthcare appointments. Young people also have access to mental health services to support their emotional needs. They are supported to stop smoking, taking illegal substances and drinking alcohol. Therapeutic support is provided for staff to enable them to support young people emotionally. Staff promote positive contact with family and friends. These important networks are nurtured and supported. Friends regularly visit the home, and staff facilitate contact with families. Staff closely monitor contact, where agreed, when young people are online, or on the phone, and when unsafe situations may occur, such as when a young person may be in contact with people who pose a threat to them. Young people participate in day-to-day and more complex decisions about their lives. They contribute towards meetings about their safety and their future. Their views and wishes are sought about activities, decor, the menu and staff. Young people have aspirations, and staff help them to realise these. For example, staff support young people to enrol on and attend college courses. Staff recognise and celebrate achievement, no matter how small. Young people are given the skills and confidence they need to successfully transition into adulthood. They learn budgeting skills, do their own laundry, shop for, prepare and cook meals, as well as doing household chores. When young	

people have expressed a desire to become pregnant staff have accessed resources, such as a virtual baby, to help them experience the reality of having and caring for a baby. Young people also complete accredited awards in practical skills, such as cooking, shopping and understanding about healthy food.

Young people benefit from a homely, clean and well-maintained environment. They see it as their home. They like their highly personalised bedrooms and decorate the house with photos of themselves and their family. An external professional said: 'I'm really impressed with the home and how every room looks like it's been influenced by the young people living here.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe in the home. This is because they have secure, trusting relationships with staff. They say that they feel able to talk to staff about any concerns they have. Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and implement these effectively. Staff educate young people about keeping themselves safe and what harmful situations looks like. They have open and honest relationships with each other. However, some young people continue to be unable to recognise when they are in harmful situations. They are at risk when they go missing from the home. Staff implement agreed proactive strategies to try to prevent them going missing. They work hard to find young people and return them to the home safely. Incidents of going missing for one young person, although not reducing, are significantly lower than in their previous placements. Agreed, targeted intervention helps to protect young people from harmful situations, particularly for young people subjected to sexual exploitation. A social worker said: 'I'm impressed with how they've worked with her.' Collaborative working with external professionals, across counties, has been important in ensuring that young people return safely to this home. A social worker said: 'I am satisfied they have done what they can for her.' Staff respond positively to young people, which means that young people feel cared for. Violent behaviour is rare, and when this has occurred, young people are remorseful. A young person has significantly reduced the level of violence she has exhibited, compared to where she has lived previously. A police officer said: 'On occasions we get a call for advice. It is rare police have to come over as staff	

manage to stop escalation.’ Staff are trained to use physical intervention but rarely use this. Instead they effectively promote positive behaviour and de-escalate negative behaviour.

Good vetting procedures help to protect young people from unsuitable adults working with them.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager provides effective, strong and supportive leadership. She is appropriately qualified and experienced. Monitoring systems used provide her with a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and there are plans to address identified shortfalls. No requirements or recommendations were made at the previous inspection, or have been made at this one. Staff provide warm and supportive child-centred care for young people. They bring a range of skills and qualifications to their work. Most staff are qualified to work in children’s residential care and those that are not are seeking to enrol on an appropriate course. Staff have access to a good training programme, which provides them with the skills and confidence to work effectively with vulnerable young people. They are well supported by each other and the registered manager. They work well as a team, providing consistency and stability. Professionals all agree that staff work closely with them to help keep young people safe. A police officer said: ‘Staff here are fantastic – they work really hard and well with us.’ The registered manager has a clear understanding of the progress that young people make from their starting points. She is able to track progress clearly with recently implemented, research-based therapeutic tools. Staff have received training to ensure that they can effectively implement the assessment and tracking systems. These systems also support staff with care planning from a therapeutic perspective, but they will take time to embed into practice.	

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 is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place children. 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 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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