

SC066469

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who may experience and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people build strong and trusting relationships with particular staff.
- A stable core staff team provides young people with consistent care.

- Some young people are making good progress with educational attendance and work experience.
- Young people are using health services to support their emotional well-being. This is helping them to manage their emotions and develop more socially acceptable behaviour.
- Young people benefit from learning independence skills.
- Young people are safer as risk-taking behaviour reduces.

The children's home's areas for development

- To have clear written records of the outcomes and the action taken when complaints are investigated.
- To maintain high standards of decoration and furnishings throughout the home.
- To complete, in line with each young person's placement and support plan, all identified direct key-work topics.
- To implement a detailed full educational timetable, with work overseen by a suitably qualified professional, for those young people undertaking their education at home.
- To have a detailed and specific pathway plan mapping out the proposals around future housing accommodation options for the individual young person prior to them leaving the home.
- For young people to receive return home interviews after missing from care incidents.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/07/2016	Full	Good
19/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/08/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	04/08/2017
6. The quality and purpose of care standard (1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (c) ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child; (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. In order to meet this care standard, all areas of the home must be decorated and furnished to a high standard, including providing suitable dining chairs, replacing kitchen unit doors and providing curtains and blinds for all windows.	04/08/2017
14. The care planning standard. (1) The care planning standard is that children— (2) requires the registered person to ensure— (c) that each child's relevant plans are followed. In particular, all identified areas that are set out in children's relevant plans should be supported with direct work from staff to evidence that young people receive the information, guidance and support as stipulated in their plans.	28/08/2017

Recommendations

- Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests ('Guide to

the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14). In particular, where young people are not attending school, ensure that a specific timetable and work, which is overseen by the school, is in place to support continued attainment for the child.

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30). In particular, the manager should request that placing authorities carry out return home interviews.
- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27). In particular to liaise with the placing authority to update the pathway plan, to include details about accommodation and housing arrangements to be sourced for the young person

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit greatly from the trusting relationships that staff build with them. A young person said: 'I get on with all staff really, but get on more with X.' These dependable relationships enable young people to listen and respond to the guidance given by staff.

Young people use health services, including routine check-ups, and receive support to ensure their good mental health and emotional well-being. This maintains and improves their health over time.

Most young people's attendance and learning in education and work placements have increased. This gives young people long-term benefits for further education or employment opportunities as young adults. However, for those struggling to integrate back into education, there is not an adequate education timetable overseen fully by a suitable and qualified education professional.

All young people enjoy regular contact with their families, and rebuild and maintain positive relationships. Young people said: 'I'm getting on so much better with my parents now. I see them every few weeks,' and, 'I talk to my dad every week and see him regularly.' This provides young people with a sense of belonging, and maintains their support networks.

Young people do take part in some social activities. In most instances, young people enjoy spending time with friends. Staff are working to build young people's leisure, hobbies and interests to increase their experiences, build further on their self-esteem and confidence, and make new friendships.

Young people gain a range of independence skills. They take part in everyday chores around the home, cooking and budgeting skills, and learn to use public transport independently as young teenagers. Staff work constantly to prepare young people to care for themselves as young adults. However, planning is less good for young people who are nearly 18 years of age. Young people do not have a detailed and current pathway plan detailing their options and future living accommodation. This does not support or assist a young person to prepare fully to leave care.

Young people benefit from the staff knowing them well, supporting and caring for them as stipulated in the placement and support plans. Professionals say that young people have made good progress. In the main, young people receive direct key-work sessions on the identified support areas. However, some direct key-work sessions have not taken place and recorded as required. This did not demonstrate that young people receive all the support, guidance and care in all the areas set out in their plans.

Routine health and safety checks ensure that young people live in a safe environment. Young people's daily life experience would be further enhanced by improvements being made to the environment that they live in. The decoration and furnishings in most rooms are adequate. However, some rooms are showing signs of wear and tear, with marked and damaged decoration, and missing kitchen unit doors. Several rooms lack personalisation, with the absence of curtains and blinds.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people say: 'I keep myself safe and don't going missing now,' and, 'I feel safe living here.'

Staff understand the vulnerabilities and risks specific to each young person. Training in child protection, first aid and behaviour management ensures that staff respond appropriately to keeping young people safe. Clear routines and boundaries help young people to feel more secure, resulting in continued reduction in risk-taking behaviour, particularly missing from care incidents and the taking of illegal substances. The staff undertake work with young people on the dangers of risk-taking behaviour. However, return home interviews after a young person is found have not taken place. The manager had not escalated this with the placing authority. Staff are aware of child sexual exploitation risks and take appropriate action to safeguard those concerned.

Young people respond well to the fair and balanced approach that staff routinely use to help them manage their behaviour effectively. Sanctions given for negative behaviour are appropriate. Young people react well to a wealth of praise and incentives that support positive behaviour. This is reinforced by the constructive relationships that they have with staff.

Young people are clear that bullying is not acceptable or permitted. A young person has complained about bullying since the last inspection. Staff have taken these matters seriously, taken action, including speaking with young people, and making clear that there is zero

tolerance of bullying. Prompt action has been taken to address this matter, and staff continue to monitor young people closely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has an interim manager in post. He has the relevant experience and qualifications to hold this position. Staff report that the manager is enthusiastic and positive. He has been proactive in getting to know young people and staff. He demonstrates a clear understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong commitment to improve further the quality of care provided to young people.

Young people benefit from good staffing levels, providing them with constant support and supervision. Staff benefit from management support. A staff member said: 'X has a really positive approach, which I like, and he is supportive.' The stable, well-trained staff receive regular formal supervision that enables them to provide good consistent care to young people.

Staff work well with other agencies and professionals, including social workers, mental health workers and the child sexual exploitation team. This collaborative working assists them in improving the outcomes for the young people in their care.

The home has addressed one recommendation made at the last inspection. A full interim senior team is in post. One recommendation is still to be completed. Investigations into complaints have been completed, but the full action taken and the outcome are not recorded.

The detailed monitoring, through the monthly regulation 44 visitors, routinely notes areas for improvement. In addition, other auditing systems exist to support the continual development and improvement in the quality of care provided.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC066469

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Registered provider address: The Keys Group, Laganwood House, Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual: Ellen McVeigh

Registered manager: Zoe Machen

Inspector

Debbie Foster, social care inspector

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