

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC066469
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	Heather Laffin
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Debbie Foster

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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

SC066469

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people build strong and trusting relationships with staff.
- There is a strong emphasis for young people to attend and attain in education.
- Staff consistently apply boundaries for young people, which support them in having age-appropriate daily routines and keep them safer.
- The importance of family networks and relationships are recognised and staff assist young people to maintain positive links.
- Young people benefit from the care of a stable and experienced staff team.
- Thorough monitoring of the service identifies shortfalls in the quality of care provided to young people, which the manager acts promptly to address.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (Regulation 36) must be kept up to date ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 14.3).
- In particular, that an amendment is made to a specific area in a young person's risk assessment to reflect the current risk and action to take. That the practical independence work undertaken with a young person is fully recorded in their plan of care. The personal education plan is obtained from the social worker.
- When a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff should work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10).
- In particular, that therapy assessments are progressed and completed in a timely manner, to ensure that the young person's mental and emotional health needs can be supported.
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role that they play in the training and development of staff in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11).
- In particular, senior residential care workers should undertake supervisory skills training.

Full report

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 emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/08/2015	Full	Good
27/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/07/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
A young person said, 'This is a good place to live. I'm doing well.' Young people enjoy trusting relationships with staff and have staff who they are closer to. These relationships are secure because the staff are a stable and consistent team that gives importance to getting to know the young people well. Staff invest their time and give support and attention to meet young people's needs and promote their welfare. Young people are routinely asked for their views and opinions on matters that affect their lives now and in the future. Young people say that 'staff listen' and that they are 'fair'. Complaints are promptly actioned and investigations are undertaken. Young people's suggestions are swiftly acted upon. A young person is satisfied with the outcome of a recent complaint that she made. Staff act each week to implement young people's ideas for meals and activities. Consultation occurs daily, at weekly residents' meetings and prior and during their statutory reviews. Staff work hard and provide individualised care to each young person. Young people receive very good support to attend school and training. Those young people who are about to start college have already succeeded in gaining qualifications at school. For other young people, their attendance in school has increased greatly, with a focus now on their attainment. Educational reviews have taken place to support professionals working together to assist young people to achieve academically. However, written information within a personal education plan or equivalent documentation has not been provided. This does not ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the individual's educational targets to support their progress further. Staff promote good health outcomes through young people attending routine and specialist health appointments. Staff encourage young people to be more physically active. A young person said, 'We have been to laser quest and go for a game of football sometimes.' Young people have benefited from support with their emotional and psychological well-being. However, work is ongoing to encourage some young people to stop smoking. While psychological assessment has commenced, progress has been slow. This does not fully support young people making timely improvement in this area. Young people gain useful self and independence life skills. A young person said, 'I'm not a bad cook. I can cook most things. I [am] capable of doing house chores. I do need to be better at budgeting my money, but I'm going to concentrate on this after my summer holiday.' This assists and provides young people with the necessary skills to care for themselves as young adults. However, the individual	

case files and supporting records do not reflect the frequent support and practical development of daily living skills that the young people have achieved.

Staff ensure that there is frequent communication with young people's families, and relatives confirm this. Staff support young people to visit family members who live some distance from the home. A grandparent said, 'Staff bring X every Sunday to see her grandad and me. She is doing well. She is coming on holiday with us and bringing a friend.' This promotes, maintains and assists in the rebuilding of family relationships. In addition, it provides young people with a network of support and a sense of belonging.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit immensely and thrive from living within a safe environment. Over time, young people significantly reduce high risk-taking behaviour, with the dangers and potential to be exploited when going missing ceasing for some young people. For young people who have more recently been admitted to the home, inroads into reducing behaviour relating to substance misuse and incidents of going missing have already started to occur. The number of incidents of going missing from care is low. Staff follow the missing from home protocols, including having regular phone contact and going out to search for young people. This ensures that young people become increasingly safer. Young people say that there is 'no bullying' occurring and that staff will intervene to stop such behaviour as it is not tolerated. This provides young people with a home that feels safe to live in. Staff follow and implement clear risk assessments, which are individual to each young person. However, one risk assessment requires reviewing as it does not accurately reflect a specific risk area for one young person. Young people have clear routines and boundaries appropriate to their age. This in turn, supports good behaviour with an emphasis on reward, praise and incentives for their positive deeds, manners and actions. The sanctions given for poor behaviour are low in number. There have been no restraints. The culture of consistent boundaries and focus on achievement contributes to young people's well-being and feeling of being secure. The provider undertakes thorough staff recruitment checks. This makes certain that all staff are safe and suitable to work with young people.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager left her position the week prior to the inspection. She has given good guidance and disseminated her knowledge to the staff team. The acting manager has worked with children for over 12 years including four years as the deputy manager. She has a good level of experience and holds the level 4 management qualification. The registered manager's careful consideration of the matching process for young people living together has resulted in young people getting along together, having a settled home life and making good progress from their starting points. A young person said, 'Since X came to live here, things are more settled. We like different things, but we get on. It's good.' The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She recognises what the service does well and where further development is required. She has taken action to appoint a senior care worker to make sure that the management team in the home has a full complement of staff. This is to ensure good management oversight and support for staff. This allows the care of young people to be met in line with the home's statement of purpose. Young people make progress that is a result of the strong attachments that the staff build with young people. Constant support, guidance and consistent boundaries that staff implement reinforce this. This enables young people to feel safe and secure in their home environment. Staff work closely with other professionals, including social workers, education providers and health practitioners. Weekly updates on young people's progress and regular phone contact takes place with social workers and families. This promotes working together to achieve the best outcomes for young people. Working closely with career and education professionals has secured a college placement for a young person. The manager has acted to implement the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. Careful consideration for new admissions to the home and the mix of young people living together has occurred and this better enables the staff to safeguard them. The environment has undergone redecoration to provide young people with a positive environment to live in. The purchasing of soft furnishings and pictures for the hallway and lounges creates a homely feel. The installation of an additional heating facility in the conservatory maintains an adequate temperature. Young people follow house rules and show respect for others and themselves due to the positive relationships established and the approaches, routines and boundaries applied. Staff receive a good level of support from the manager. One staff member said, 'I get regular supervision and we have a monthly staff meeting and daily handovers to discuss the young people and plan their care.' All staff have the level 3 diploma	

or equivalent, with the exception of two staff members in their first year of employment. Staff receive essential training and refresher sessions in such areas as safeguarding children, behaviour management, first aid and medication. There is also more specialised training undertaken around such areas as child sexual exploitation and drugs awareness. This ensures that staff are well equipped and supported with the skills and knowledge to provide a good level of care to young people. However, some members of the home's management team have not yet undertaken supervisory skills training to make sure that they have suitable skills to provide staff with formal supervision.

Clear and detailed monitoring systems exist. The shortfalls identified are promptly actioned. These auditing tools support the manager to maintain and improve the quality of care provided to young people.

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