

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	19/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC066469
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	Heather Laffin
Registered manager	Joanne Simpson
Inspector	Debbie Foster

Inspection date	19/02/2016
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 judge that it has declined in effectiveness. Young people's progress and daily life experiences have deteriorated since the last inspection. One young person continues to engage and learn in school and their risk- taking behaviour has ceased. However, for other young people, high risk-taking behaviour continues and has escalated in particular areas. This involves going missing, unauthorised absences, property damage, illegal substance taking, and regular episodes of disruptive, violent, aggressive and criminal behaviours. Police intervention has been routinely required at the home. Young people experience frequent disorder in their daily lives and choose not to consistently accept the set daily routines and safe boundaries. Staff work tirelessly to engage, protect and safeguard young people to reduce inappropriate and unsafe behaviour. They change their support and care strategies to manage individual behaviours in an attempt to engage young people. Staff act promptly to inform and work with other professionals where concerns and serious incidents occur. A number of professionals meetings have taken place to assist the communication with placing social workers and other safeguarding agencies. However, this is not always successful in effecting positive change. There has been a lack of engagement from particular young people leaving professionals concerned about their safety and wellbeing. Timely action to review the suitability of placements has not occurred. This has led to a downward spiral of behaviours that compromise young people's safety. A young person said, 'I have lived here a while now, and do see X as my home. It hasn't been easy living here recently. But the staff are caring, and I get on with most of them well. I'm doing well on my course and loving my placement. I can cook for myself and am doing OK.' Professionals say, 'X is a challenging young person, staff try to safeguard X and promote education. X is not engaging,' and 'There continues to be a focus for X to try and stay out of trouble. Staff work hard with X. They communicate well, keep me informed of developments.'	

The standard of the home environment has deteriorated. This is a result of several months of damage caused by some young people. In spite of a number of repairs and replaced furniture, there are still marks on the walls, doors and damage to some bedroom furnishings. A young person said, 'We need more homely touches, especially in the lounge. Like pictures, cushions and throws. This will make it cosy.' The conservatory doubles up as a dining area but is very cold. The heating facilities were not sufficient at the time of inspection. The current condition and décor of the home does not provide young people with a positive environment.

Action has been taken to implement the requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection. All young people have personal education plans, which include information on their education attendance and attainment. This supports their learning and on-going focus to plan and achieve academically. The manager scrutinises new referrals made to the home to ensure that the needs of the individuals can be met alongside the existing group. Consequently, due to the particular needs of the residing young people, the manager has declined new admissions to the home since the last inspection.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of young people, which is in line with their individual care plans and other supporting records. Records are maintained to a good standard; risk assessments are reviewed and updated when required.

Missing from home protocols are followed. This shows that staff are clear on how they should care for young people. A staff member said, 'We work hard with the young people to care for them and keep them safe. It's not been easy recently. Two young people have not wanted to engage, but X is doing really well.'

Staff receive good support through daily handovers, formal supervision and staff meetings. This ensures that they are clear on how to implement care and support strategies for young people. A staff member said, 'We have a supportive manager who is approachable and we work well as a team.'

Monthly monitoring of the service covers all the areas required by the regulations. The decline in young people's behaviour over the last few months is noted within the independent person's reports. The monitoring reports make recommendations to facilitate improvements to the quality of care, the manager responds to these appropriately.

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 experience emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/08/2015	Full	Good
27/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/07/2014	Full	Good
31/01/2014	Interim	Good progress

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 meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard 12 (2) In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to prevent risk-taking behaviours and consideration to the suitability of the placement, the registered person must ensure – (a) that staff – (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about child's welfare.	28/05/2016
6: The quality and purpose of care standard 6 (2) In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to all areas of the home being decorated and furnished to a good standard throughout. With the temperature in the conservatory being maintained to facilitate its use as a dining room. The standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– (c) ensure the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to– (i) meet the needs of each child; and (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.	28/05/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Staff should have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. (The Guide to the Quality

Standards, page 39, paragraph 8.14) In particular, staff should be able to use the positive relationships established, apply approaches and strategies to ensure young people follow the house rules including sleeping in their own bedroom and respect for each other and staff.

■ For children's homes to be a nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9) In particular, provided in consultation with young people pictures and soft furnishings for the hallways and lounges.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016