

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	31/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC066469
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bettercare Keys Ltd
Registered provider address	The Keys Group, Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Heather Laffin
Registered manager	Zoe Machen
Inspector	Debbie Foster

Inspection date	30/01/2017
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 sustained effectiveness. Young people benefit from the consistent care provided by the long-standing and experienced core staff team. A young person said: 'I have good relationships with staff.' Consequently, young people are settled in their placements. This has brought about continued steady progress and a reduction in risk-taking behaviours, such as missing from home episodes, child sexual exploitation, the taking of illegal substances and challenging behaviour. Staff have addressed bullying incidents and they continue to appropriately support and monitor young people to keep everyone safe. All young people have made some educational progress from their starting points. However, education attendance varies for each young person, some making more progress than others. Young people are proud that they have gained independence skills, being able to cook and having more self-care skills. A new young person said: 'It's my first time living in a children's home and I did not know what to expect. Staff have been great, explained things to me and this is helping me to settle in.' Recommendations made at the last inspection are met. Risk assessments have been reviewed to reflect young people's current risks. Personal education plans have been completed and are held on the young people's case files. Young people receive therapy sessions to support their emotional well-being. Senior support workers have undertaken supervisory skills training. This enables them to provide the right assistance, guidance and advice to the staff that they supervise. Detailed monitoring of the service identifies areas to improve regarding the quality of care. Staff maintain good relationships with supporting professionals, including social workers, keeping them well informed about young people's progress and events. Since the last inspection, the new manager has registered with Ofsted. However, there has been a depleted senior team for several months, including an assistant manager vacancy. This falls short of providing robust line management support in all instances. There is confirmation of the cover arrangements for the imminent	

maternity leave of the registered manager. This could result in inconsistencies in the quality of care delivered.

There has also been a delay in concluding a young person's complaint. The young person is dissatisfied with this. This reflects a shortfall in adhering to the home's complaints policies and procedures.

Information about this children's home

This is a privately-owned children's home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/07/2016	Full	Good
19/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/08/2015	Full	Good
27/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 recommendation(s):

- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31 (1)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

In particular, ensure that there is a full senior team, including an assistant manager, and arrangements made for an interim manager to be in place prior to the registered manager going on maternity leave.

- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.13)

In particular, complaints should be concluded in a timely manner in line with the home's policy and procedure.

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'.

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, work based 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
Text phone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017