

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	08/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC066469
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Better Care 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	08/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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:

- Staff build positive relationships with young people. In turn the young people trust the staff, allowing them to care and work with them.
- Staff are well trained and receive good informal and formal support from the manager. This enables staff to understand and respond appropriately to the individual needs of the young people in their care.
- Young people profit from having stable placements where staff provide consistent care, nurture them and persevere to keep them safe.
- Young people's high risk taking behaviour has reduced or stopped over time. This is due to the successful support, guidance and behaviour management strategies implemented by the staff team.
- Most young people have made progress in education, increasing their attendance and attainment levels.
- Young people have developed life skills appropriate to their age and understanding which will assist them to care for themselves as young adults leaving care.

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
Children's case records 36.—(1) The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry. In particular that all looked after children have a personal education plan including those over the age of 16 years of age.	28/11/15

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person must challenge (under regulation 5 (c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph, 11.5) In particular ensure that the referral system is sufficiently robust so that all relevant information is obtained prior to admission. This is to ensure a secure decision can be made about the suitability of a placement.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/07/2014	Full	Good
31/01/2014	Interim	Good progress
07/11/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people benefit from the good individualised care provided within a nurturing environment, from a stable staff team, who are caring and committed to supporting them. This has assisted young people to move positively forward in their lives and to overcome a number of difficulties. Young people are actively involved in learning and undertaking daily living skills in preparation for looking after themselves as young adults. A young person demonstrated excellent cooking skills, preparing and cooking a meal for herself and the other young people during the inspection. Young people said that they do chores around the home, including cleaning their own bedrooms, their laundry and menu planning. Staff strongly promote contact for young people with their families enabling relationships to be rebuilt where needed. Young people access all agreed contact with parents and other family members. This includes young people who live a long way from their families. Young people speak to their families by phone, visit and have overnight stays. Where difficulties exist, staff advocate for young people to ensure that contact continues. This provides young people with a sense of identity and belonging, ensuring meaningful and important relationships continue. Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff and get on with most. They are encouraged to give their views through regular key work sessions, residents' meetings, statutory reviews and daily conversation with staff. This demonstrates good consultation with young people. Young people engage in social and recreational activities inside and outside home. They enjoyed going out on day trips throughout the summer. In particular, a wild life park and going to the coast. Young people have a healthy lifestyle. Staff encourage and promote this through . attendance at regular health appointments and where needed access to children's emotional and mental health services. A young person said, 'Staff support me to go to health appointments, I went to the doctors today, and I went in on my own, now that I am older.' Young people are aware of the dangers of smoking and substance misuse. Direct work continues in this area to support young people's long-term health to promote their wellbeing Staff recognise the value of education and improve young people's life chances	

considerably as a result of securing school or alternative education placements. Those young people, who are hard to teach, greatly benefit from the multi- agency approach which staff use to ensure they receive and engage in suitable education provision. Over time, young people make progress by increasing their attendance in school and college. In turn, this has brought achievements in their learning. However, one young person did not have a personal education plan, to indicate current plans for their further education and this does not ensure staff have all the relevant information to support their continued progress in this area.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people know that staff give priority to keeping them safe and they said they feel safe. A young person said, 'Staff always ask where I'm are going, who with, and arrange a time for coming back, and phone me while I'm out. If young people don't come back on time they get reported missing to the police,' and another said, 'They talk to us all the time about keeping ourselves safe.' Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the risks identified for each young person. They follow the written risk assessments which set out how they are to work with young people to reduce and/or eliminate these risks. Staff are proactive in their response when a young person goes missing. It is routine practice that they go out to search for them. Multi- agency meetings are held to ensure everyone is doing as much as they can to safeguard young people. As a result, over time, risk taking behaviour has declined and in some cases stopped. This includes going missing from care and risks of sexual exploitation. One young person's criminal behaviour had reduced significantly since living at the home. Young people benefit greatly from the promotion of positive behaviour. There are with clear boundaries and routines, providing a secure environment in which to grow up in. Positive behaviour is reinforced with rewards and praise. Young people say that they have good relationships with most staff, each name particular staff who they get on very well with. These are the people they would go to if they had a problem. Each young person said that the staff are fair with them and explain things. There have been no incidents where young people have had to be physically restrained since the last inspection. Where young people present challenging behaviour, staff use de-escalation and redirection approaches, which is more effective. Young people are not subject to bullying in the home. They did acknowledge that they sometimes fell out. Current staff levels ensure that young people can be closely monitored. Where young people negatively influence others, this is	

addressed, through discussions and redirection.

Complaints about the service are taken seriously and are actively investigated. Young people know how to complain. Since the last inspection three complaints have been made, action has been taken to investigate these promptly. One complaint made by a young person has been resolved satisfactory. The other two complaints were being investigated at the time of the inspection.

Young people benefit from living in a suitable equipped, clean and safe environment. Some changes have been made within the environment recently to provide sleep-in accommodation for staff and there are plans to decorate a lounge area and have new furniture. Young people said they like their bedrooms which are personalised. The manager responds well to young people's requests for example, wanting more pictures and ornaments in the lounges and a new mattress.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The registered manager has a wealth of experience of working with children and young people. In addition she is qualified and holds National Vocational Qualifications at level 4 in working with children and young people and also leadership and management. The manager provides a good level of support to a stable and experienced staff team. Staff said, 'She is always available and very approachable and I get regular supervision.' The manager uses her understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service to continually improve the care provided to the young people. She has an excellent knowledge of the young people's needs, and the areas where staff require further support and direction. Furthermore, when it is required, she addresses important matters with placing authorities to improve the experiences of and safeguard young people. Staff receive a good level of training, with the majority holding the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. There is additional mandatory training in areas including safeguarding, first aid and behaviour management. Staff knowledge is further enhanced with supplementary training in such areas as illegal highs and child sexual exploitation. This equips them well to support, understand and care for the young people. Young people benefit from the strong effective working relationships that the manager and staff have established with other professionals, including independent reviewing officers, social workers, youth offending officers and	

education providers. This provides a multi-agency approach to ensure young people are safe and are making good progress in their lives. A social worker said, 'I am happy with the level of communication, the home keeps me well informed, X has made good progress, especially in education and risk taking behaviour.'

The two recommendations made at the last inspection have been implemented. All young people now have education placements to support their learning and preparation for adulthood. Young people now also contribute to the manager's monitoring of the service. This indicates that they are consulted and listened to, and influence the running of the home and their care.

The service is routinely monitored by the manager and an independent person to ensure that young people are cared for appropriately in line with their placement plans, are safe and are making progress. Deficits are identified where necessary and recommendations made where required. These are actively addressed by the manager to bring improvement to the quality of care provided to young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the service to be provided to young people. The provider's admission procedure has been followed by staff, but shortfalls in the processes have been identified. Not all crucial information was provided at the point of making a decision to admit a young person. Further information came to light after their admission was agreed. This has had some impact on the present group of young people which required the staff to make changes to particular care practices and routines. This adaption was to ensure all young people are kept safe and their wellbeing maintained.

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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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