

# SC370949

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private organisation. The home provides long-term placements for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 3 to 4 August 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 6 March 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:

- Proactive key-work sessions and group meetings help the children to build positive relationships with the staff.
- Assessments of the children are shared with the staff group ahead of any

proposed placement. This helps the staff to plan well in order to meet the children's needs.

- Some of the children are being supported to start to make the transition to further education. The staff are working in partnership with the virtual school staff to help other children to return to education.
- When children go missing from the home, the staff work with the police and other agencies to find the children and return them to the home quickly.
- The manager identifies the risk factors for each of the children accurately. Her weekly monitoring of the children's records means that the children's care plans are accurate and include reviews of incidents and activities.
- Staff work energetically to help the children to settle in quickly and remain safe.
- The children have pathway plans that help to prepare them for independence. The children develop skills in budgeting and cooking for themselves.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Children need help, support and guidance to learn to use the internet safely.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 06/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness   |
| 29/09/2016      | Full            | Good                      |
| 15/03/2016      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 10/12/2015      | Full            | Good                      |

## Recommendations

- Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)  
In particular, help the children to stay safe when using the internet.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

This home provides a good standard of care for the children. The staff build positive relationships with the children through proactive key-work sessions and group meetings. The staff spend time helping the children to understand other children's needs and backgrounds. The children learn to be tolerant of each other because of this work.

There have been no recorded incidents of bullying at the home since the last inspection. Staff work diligently to ensure that there is a calm and nurturing environment for the children.

Children enjoy a range of activities, including day trips to the seaside, cinema outings, and fitness classes at a local gym, which the staff attend along with the children. These activities, along with nutritious home-cooked food, help the children to maintain their well-being. The staff help the children to make and keep appointments with their doctor and dentist. The staff implement medical and health advice or treatment plans, and ensure that the information is recorded in the children's care plans. The manager reviews the care plans regularly to ensure that they contain current information.

Observations of the interaction between the children and staff during the inspection highlighted the staff members' calm and caring approach. Staff understand the issues that have affected the children prior to their placement. Assessments of the children are shared with the staff group ahead of any proposed placement. This helps the staff to meet all of the children's needs. Children who are new to the home settle in well and feel welcomed. One child commented, 'This is an amazing home where the staff look out for you. I get on great with all of the staff. I go fishing with my key worker, which is great. We have fun together.'

Some of the children have maintained their education while living at this home. The staff have helped them to start the transition to further education at a local college by attending open evenings and introduction days. These children have grown in confidence in respect of moving to a larger setting in another town. Another child who had been excluded from their previous school is being supported to undertake school work at the home. The manager has made positive contact with the child's virtual school staff to plan for the child's reintroduction to school in the autumn term.

The children are starting to work through their pathway plans, which is helping to prepare them for independent living. The children are learning to budget and to cook for themselves.

Staff take the children to visit their family and friends, which helps the children to maintain these important relationships and to keep in touch with their background and culture. Some of the children have telephone contact with their families, which the staff monitor to make sure that it is safe. Some of the children's families have visited the home.

The children have made good progress because they live at this home. Children who had been missing from previous homes and had engaged in risky behaviours have reduced these behaviours. Staff have worked energetically to get to know the children and to

develop good relationships so that children settle in at the home and remain safe.

The staff have started to talk to the children about internet safety and to use in-house programmes and specialist knowledge to help the children to understand how to stay safe. However, there has been a delay in initiating this work despite the children having internet access.

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

Trained staff have used physical intervention on two occasions since the last inspection, when children have placed themselves or others at risk. The manager has reviewed the records of these incidents and ensured that the children have had an opportunity to discuss the incidents to make sure that they understand the action taken by staff to keep them safe. This meets the regulatory requirement set at the last inspection.

Children go missing from this home. The staff work in partnership with the police and other agencies to find the children and return them to the home quickly. When the children return, independent workers meet with them to discuss the reasons why they left the home. These meetings help to build a picture of the triggers of these incidents. This action addresses the shortfall highlighted at the last inspection.

The staff use one-to-one key-work sessions to discuss a range of topics with the children related to keeping themselves safe. The discussions have included the risk of child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty. These open and frank discussions help children to understand the dangers of grooming and radicalisation and to be alert to the signs and indicators.

The manager monitors, reviews and analyses the risks to the children through her weekly monitoring of the children's behaviour, activities and incidents. She checks that the children's care plans are accurate and that staff have the information they need to work with the children safely. This action meets the requirement set at the last inspection.

Children say that they feel safe at this home. Placing social workers have no concerns about the children. One social worker said, 'Overall, it was one of the most successful placements for this child, who described themselves as very happy at the home.'

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager has been in post for three years and has worked in residential childcare for 13 years. She is on target to complete her level 5 diploma in management in residential childcare. The manager undertakes in-house training courses to support her knowledge and understanding of managing the home.

The manager supports the staff, through one-to-one supervision and team meetings, to build open and positive relationships with the children. She discusses the children's safe-care during supervision and team meetings, which helps the staff to maintain their focus on improving the children's outcomes. Staff talk about the supportive nature of their relationships with the manager, in particular how she maintains her relationships with the children. The manager works alongside the staff, which helps her to see how the

staff interact with the children. Because of this, she can offer advice to the staff as they work with the children and take action quickly if she needs to change the approach that staff are using. The manager wants the best outcomes for each child and she encourages the staff to have the same aspirations for the children.

The staff have all completed induction training, which provides them with the knowledge base that they need to meet the children's needs and to work in line with the organisation's policies. All of the eligible staff hold a relevant level 3 diploma.

The manager has developed an effective monitoring tool to review the case files. She communicates well with other agencies to seek external views about the care provided, and she includes this feedback in her monitoring reports. The action that the manager has taken addresses a shortfall that was identified at the last inspection. It also means that the manager can assure herself that the home is achieving its goals in line with the statement of purpose.

The independent visitor consults with the children, parents and professionals to gain their views about the care provided. The manager uses the information contained in the independent visitor's monthly reports to focus the staff on the issues raised. She disseminates the information from the independent visitor at team meetings, to identify the actions that the staff need to take to make improvements, as well as the positive feedback from the visitor.

The manager challenged the plans made by a placing authority when the authority suggested that a child was ready to move to independence. The manager worked with the local school and other workers to complete an assessment to highlight how detrimental this move would be. Consequently, the independent living plan and the intended move were changed until the child's skills and confidence had been developed.

The manager regularly checks reports and logs to ensure that the children are making progress against their goals and targets. She keeps the placing social workers updated with monthly reports. These reports help the placing authority to monitor the children's progress and to change the care plans accordingly.

Key-work sessions and community group meetings provide the children with regular opportunities to express their views and wishes. The children have chosen the decoration for the home and they choose the activities that they would like to participate in.

There have been no complaints about the standard of care, and no notifications submitted to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The home has received a great deal of positive feedback from external agencies about the good outcomes for children. A drug and alcohol misuse counsellor who visits the home to work with the children said:

The staff have carefully worked to develop independence skills, and they have helped the children to safely manage free time. The home provides a nurturing environment that encourages children to be the best they can be. Staff provide support and care to help the children to make positive changes in their lives.

## **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. Whenever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom 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 and 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:** SC370949

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Bettercare Keys Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Kelly Looker

**Registered manager:** Michelle Davie

## Inspector

Michael Mulvaney, social care inspector

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