

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC370949
Inspector	Clive Lucas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered person address	Laganwood House 44 Newforge Lane Belfast BT9 5NW
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Registered manager	Michelle Louise Bingham
Date of last inspection	24/10/2013

Inspection date	13/08/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Since the previous inspection there has been a compliance case, which involved an inspector visiting the home to look into concerns about placement matching. As a result of this requirements were made relating to the assessment of new placements and the standard of accommodation. These have been effectively addressed. The requirements from the previous inspection have also been addressed and this has provided a better level of care for young people.

The home provides a good level of individualised care. Young people and outside agencies make very positive comments about the home and the progress that they make as a result of being there. Staff and the Registered Manager have a thorough knowledge of the young people, their needs and vulnerabilities. This helps them to work with young people to achieve better outcomes and reduce risk taking behaviours.

There are some shortfalls related to leadership and management, but also a number of strengths in this area. The Statement of Purpose has not been reviewed to comply with amended regulations and a review of the quality of care in the home is overdue. One action point from the fire risk assessment has not been addressed, but the rest of the fire protection system is working to help protect young people. There is good interagency working and good systems for monitoring the outcomes for

individual young people. There are some shortfalls in staffing due to on-going illness that have impacted upon the management time available in the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a large private organisation and provides long-term placements on behalf of local authorities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
03/06/2013	Full	good
22/08/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/05/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and notify HMCI of any such revision within 28 days (Regulation 5 (a and b))	26/09/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 least once in every 3 months and supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted (Regulation 34(1)(a) and (2))	19/09/2014
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the size of the children's home, the statement of purpose, and the number and needs of the children	26/09/2014

	accommodated there; and the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home.	
32 (2001)	ensure that the requirements of that Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 32(1a)(b))	19/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resource the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. (NMS 15.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people who live at the home develop very good relationships with staff. They describe staff and in particular the Registered Manager as good and say that they listen and help them if they are upset. This helps young people to have a sound base from which to make progress. It also helps them to develop good attachments and to benefit from positive role models, including gender role models. Young people develop an understanding of their health needs, how to manage their health and the importance of healthy eating. These are skills that will help the young people to identify potential risks to their health that may be caused by their lifestyle choices. It will also help them to live more healthily in the future as a result of their time at this home.

Young people can have an input into day-to-day decisions, as well as those that relate to their care plans. They say that they have regular resident's meetings and they can talk to staff. They are involved in decisions over matters such as activities, the way rooms in the home is used and the people they have contact with.

Young people living at the home make progress in their education. The degree of progress varies and some may make a high level of progress, while others are more resistant. Even in these cases the placing social workers confirm that young people receive encouragement to attend and do make progress on their starting points. Young people who are beyond school age are supported to look for alternatives such as further education and voluntary work. This helps them to appreciate the importance of education and to achieve better educational outcomes as a result of being in the home. In turn, this will help them to develop self-esteem and provide them with greater and more varied opportunities for the future.

Quality of care **good**

Staff and the manager at the home have a good understanding of the young people as individuals, including their needs and the risks associated with their behaviours. As a result of this, they are able to provide individualised care to meet young people's needs and to try and reduce their risk taking behaviour. Some achieve a significant reduction in risk taking behaviour. Staff develop positive relationships with young people. One young person said that they 'really like working with staff' and that they 'do look after you like a family'. Placing social workers say that young people develop positive relationships with staff and other young people in the home. One said that staff 'have been really good, the manager in particular has a very good relationship with (the young person)'. Social workers identify the progress that young people make as being the result of the work that the staff and manager do.

Staff encourage young people to take part in education and recognise the importance of this. When young people are resistant to education staff will work with the organisation's school and the young person to try and overcome the barriers. This can include tutors coming to the home at times when they are most likely to be able to engage young people. Consequently, even for those who are very resistant to engage with education, staff keep trying and progress is made over time. Some young people come to the home with a very poor record of attending education and staff are able to turn this round quickly and successfully.

Staff and the manager at the home work well with other agencies and, where appropriate, parents to help achieve positive outcomes for young people. One social worker said that they were impressed by the staff, who are really good at communicating with them and the young person's parent. A health worker commented very positively on how the staff and manager provided clear information on a young person before the worker visited the home and how well they supported to work in their meeting with the young person. A parent said that the home was 'fantastic' and that they 'did not have a bad word to say about them'. These positive relationships help to ensure that all those involved are aware of the plans for young people and that any problems can be identified and addressed. Consequently, the work with young people is more effective.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say that they feel safe in the home. One described it as a really safe place to be and a place that helps lots of children out. Young people living at the home have reduced the frequency of the times they are missing from care. When young people do go missing staff make strong efforts to find them. They will follow young people, attempt to keep in contact through mobile telephones and go and look for them. Missing young people are reported to the police in line with their plans and the local police protocol. The police say that staff respond appropriately to episodes of missing from care. They commented positively on the home's risk assessment of placements, use of strategy meetings and development of plans to reduce risks for young people. There are times when young people continue with high risk taking behaviours. The home make sure that placing authorities are aware of this and they continue to try different strategies to reduce the behaviour. The Registered Manager and other senior managers review placements and in exceptional cases will say if they think that young people need an alternative provision to help keep them safe. This all helps to reduce the risks for young people living at the home.

Staff work with other agencies and encourage young people to use services that can help them reduce their risk taking behaviour. One social worker commented on the way the home had made this a whole group activity to avoid singling one particular young person out and as a result the work was successful. Young people report that there is no bullying on the home, but they are confident that staff would deal with it

if there were.

There is a very low use of restraint in the home. Following incidents of restraint young people are spoken with and have the opportunity to have their views recorded. This provides a safeguard and also helps to ensure that young people develop an understanding of their behaviour. Young people are encouraged to develop positive behaviour through rewards as well as sanctions. One professional from another agency commented extremely positively on how the Registered Manager and staff had managed a recent and very challenging situation. They said that they were very impressed; staff seemed very experienced and the Registered Manager in particular was very calm and focused during a heightened situation. The good relationships that staff have with young people help contribute to effective management of inappropriate or challenging behaviour.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been in post for 18 months. She has a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and last year she started working towards a Qualification and Credit Framework at level 5. This will be a suitable qualification for the role she is undertaking.

The issues identified at the previous inspection and as a result of a compliance visit in March 2014 have been addressed to provide better care for young people. Of particular significance is the improvement in assessing the potential impact of new placements on the existing group and how well the home can meet the needs of all the young person concerned. This had been an issue, but placing authorities and the police have commented positively on the current effectiveness of this process. As a result placements are less likely to be disrupted by new young people moving into the home.

The Statement of Purpose for the home has not been reviewed to be compliant with the amended Children's Homes Regulation 2001. Consequently, this up to date information is not available to parents, placing authorities or young people. There is regular visiting of the home by an independent visitor to help monitor the performance of the home. The Registered Manager has not undertaken a review of the quality of care by monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 of the Children's Homes Regulation 2001, prepared a report in respect of the review, or sent a copy to Ofsted within the timescales set out. The Registered Manager does have a sound understanding of the operation of the home and its strengths and weaknesses. She also has a good knowledge of the young people in the home. However, by not completing the review of the quality of care the effectiveness of this process is limited. There is a development plan in place, but this is not fully up to date to reflect the current priorities in the home. While the manager is aware of the priorities, not having them clearly recorded does limit the effectiveness of dealing with them.

Currently the home is not at its full staffing compliment and this is compounded by some significant illness of, in particular, senior staff. Vacancies are covered by agency staff. The Registered Manager is using consistent agency staff who know the young people and who are known to be competent. This helps limit the disruption to young people's relationships and maintain the quality of care. However, at times the Registered Manager is having to work on shift and this is limiting her management time.

There has been a significant investment in the fabric of the home to provide a better standard of accommodation for the young people who live there. Young people say that they like the home. There is a sound process for ensuring the safety of children from the risk of fire, including regular equipment checks and evacuation drills. There is a fire risk assessment which is reviewed annually, but one action identified in this report has not been completed. The overall fire safety measures limit the impact of this failing, but it does prevent the system being as effective as it could.

The Registered Manager and staff have effective relationships with other agencies which help to provide more comprehensive and effective care for young people. Several other agencies, staff and young people commented positively about the management of the home. There is good monitoring of the outcomes for young people through individual books, in which is recorded information such as the frequency of missing from care and restraints. These help to provide information to inform the practice and planning for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.