

SC370956

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 January 2018

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: 30 January 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:

- Staff are committed to the young people and know them well. Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with young people.
- Young people are happy and say that they have positive experiences living in the home.
- Young people feel safe and secure. This means that incidents of going missing from the home and self-harm have significantly reduced for each young person.
- A therapeutic approach is taken in all work with young people.
- Young people are at the centre of practice. Effective placement plans and risk assessments help to ensure young people's safety and protection.
- Young people are making good progress in their education.
- Young people feel listened to. They make a significant contribution to their care plans and are involved in decisions that affect the running of the home.
- The registered manager provides strong, supportive leadership and has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses.
- Staff feel very well supported by the management team.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Not enough work is currently being done with young people to discourage them from smoking.
- Some consequences for poor behaviour are not restorative in nature.
- The pantry is routinely kept locked. This has the potential to give an institutional feel to the home.
- Some agency workers, who have been in a care role for some time, are not yet qualified.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/07/2016	Full	Good
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Children's homes staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day to day health and well-being, particularly with regards to smoking. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)
- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- All staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are happy and settled. They speak positively about the staff and the good care that is offered to them. One young person said, 'I feel safe here. I know the staff will help me if I need it and I get on with all of them.'

Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff. The placement enables young people, who have difficult histories, to stabilise. For example, episodes of young people going missing reduce significantly. Staff ensure that they communicate well with young people's parents and carers, and other agencies. A social worker stated that the placement had been 'unbelievable' and 'very successful'. The social worker went on to say that the staff, 'know her triggers; they have a fantastic relationship with her and they manage her behaviours really well'.

Young people are making good progress. They are all in education and are doing well. Staff support young people to understand the importance of education. One young person is waiting for a school placement. In the interim, the home has organised for her to receive home schooling. The two other young people, who were not in education prior to the placement, now have 100% attendance. This is a significant improvement for them. Their life chances are significantly improved as a result.

Staff support young people to become healthier, both physically and emotionally. They are supported to attend health appointments. This enables young people to understand the importance of looking after their health. Specialist help is accessed without delay. All young people have been offered support from the children and adolescent mental health service, and support in relation to the cessation of smoking. However, all three young people smoke in the house, affecting others such as staff and visitors. More could be done to enforce boundaries with young people in relation to this matter.

Staff promote good quality contact between young people and their parents or carers. This involves travelling with young people so that relationships with family members can be maintained and developed. Improved family relationships enable young people to develop a more positive sense of identity, and to have a strong family support network in the longer term.

A therapist is employed by the home. The therapist supports staff to implement the therapeutic model of care. Young people's progress is tracked and evaluated to ensure that therapeutic interventions are effective.

Young people are respected and valued by the staff. Their views are considered in the day-to-day running of the home. The house is welcoming, warm and in good condition. Young people are able to relax in a nurturing environment. Young people have pets. This enables them to take on caring responsibilities that increase their self-esteem, empathy and social skills.

The home has recently been decorated, and the young people helped to choose colours and styles. House meetings and feedback questionnaires help staff to have a better understanding of how young people are feeling about their placements. Young people are encouraged to contribute to their placement plans. This provides young people with a sense of responsibility and control over their lives, and helps raise their confidence and self-esteem. Two of the young people are on independence plans. Staff support young people to develop practical life skills in preparation for adulthood. These include budgeting, shopping, cooking and cleaning. One young person spent a week attending a residential personal and social development programme.

Leisure activities are promoted. A young person participated in a local pantomime. All the staff went to see the show. This increased the young person's confidence and helped to integrate her into the local community. The young person has also developed friendships at her college.

During the inspection, the room containing the young people's fridge and freezer was

locked. While young people have said they wanted their food locked away as it prevented other young people taking their items, this does not promote group living and self-restraint. It has the potential to give an institutional feel to the home.

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

Young people are making significant progress in managing their risk-taking behaviours. Incidents of young people going missing have considerably reduced over time. Similarly, for young people who self-harm, incidents have significantly reduced. Staff provide nurturing and therapeutic care as well as strong, consistent boundaries and a clear structure. This helps young people to feel safe and secure.

Staff support young people well to manage their own behaviour. Positive consequences are given for desirable behaviour. The registered manager spoke about a young person whose behaviour was becoming negative. A new strategy was devised to praise the smallest of achievements. This had such a positive impact on the young person that their behaviour improved significantly. Staff have a good understanding of why young people behave in the way they do and take this into consideration when they apply sanctions for undesirable behaviours. Sometimes sanctions are restorative in nature, but this is not consistent.

Staff use carefully targeted interventions to help young people to calm when they are agitated or anxious. As a last resort, fully trained staff will use restraint if the young person is likely to hurt themselves or others, or significantly damage property. Young people are restrained infrequently, and the frequency reduces over time.

Staff have a good understanding of the home's child protection procedures. They implement these procedures effectively when required. Records demonstrate that appropriate action is taken to resolve any safeguarding concerns. Complaints are responded to quickly, and action is taken to resolve the issues. Bullying issues are managed sensitively, and there are currently no issues of bullying in the home.

Health and safety procedures help to protect young people from avoidable hazards.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has made a positive impact on the lives of young people and the staff team. This has meant that young people have made good progress. Staff retention has improved, providing young people with better continuity of care. All requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection have been fully addressed.

The registered manager is currently working through the level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. He will complete this within the next few months. He has effective monitoring systems. This means that he is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager has good plans to address shortfalls and improve the quality of the service. He competently tracks young people's

experiences and progress. He looks for patterns and trends, and then implements strategies to address any concerning developments. Consequently, young people thrive in this home. The manager is passionate about providing young people with a high-quality service. He ensures that staff are well trained and have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the young people well. Staff appreciate the high level of support provided by the registered manager and senior staff.

An established and diverse staff team means that young people have access to staff who have a range of expertise. Staff are committed to the young people and genuinely care about them. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the young people. They provide a strong, well-thought-out and consistent approach.

Staff have either completed their level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare, or are in the process of completing this qualification. They have access to a good training programme that equips them with the skills and knowledge they require. They are clearly able to demonstrate how they have put their training into practice.

The home currently has some staff vacancies. When necessary, shifts are covered by staff, bank or agency staff. The frequency of agency staff being used in the home has reduced, but is still regular. The registered manager tries to use the same group of agency staff to provide continuity for the young people. Although some agency staff are appropriately qualified, some are not. This means that they may not have the knowledge and skills required to work with the complex and vulnerable young people who live at this home.

Staff work in partnership with external professionals. This means that they provide a coordinated response to the health and well-being needs of young people. A social worker said: 'Staff communicate well with me. I know what is happening and they provide me with a weekly update.'

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 differences 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. Wherever 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, 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: SC370956

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Registered provider address: Laganwood House, Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual: Patricia James

Registered manager: Adam Tarrant

Inspector(s)

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

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