

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>12/08/2015</b>                                                  |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC370956</b>                                                    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                        |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                             |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>BetterCare Keys Limited</b>                                     |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>Laganwood House, 44<br/>Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9<br/>5NW</b> |

|                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Kelly Looker</b>   |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Peter Gale</b>     |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Judith Longden</b> |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>12/08/2015</b>                |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Declined in Effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                      |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                  |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                      |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                  |
| <b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                      |
| <b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                      |

## SC370956

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people make very good progress, given their starting points. They recognise the progress they have made and the positive impact living here has on their lives.
- The introduction of 'journey folders' enables young people to positively review all aspects of their education and health.
- Young people are fully involved in their care and the running of the home. In particular, they have input into the development plan for the future of the home.
- Risk-taking behaviours such as missing from home and self-harm have reduced because of effective management by staff.
- There is a strong, central core team of senior and experienced staff and managers. This ensures young people are able to form positive relationships. There has been a significant reduction in the use of agency staff.
- The manager and staff have implemented a number of significant improvements making this service unrecognisable from previous inspections; the home is a welcoming and friendly environment, staff provide very good care and young people are happy, achieving and say they feel very safe.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

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

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 21/01/2015      | Interim         | Declined in Effectiveness |
| 19/08/2014      | Full            | Adequate                  |
| 05/03/2014      | Full            | Good                      |
| 09/01/2014      | Full            | Inadequate                |

## Inspection Judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>The home is welcoming and provides a nurturing family environment. Young people feel cared for and are happy; there is much laughter in the home with young people having fun and enjoying positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'I would rate the home as good,' and another commented, 'it is awesome here.'</p> <p>There are occasions when group dynamics lead to some disruptive behaviour, but these incidents are dealt with swiftly. The provision of a range of activities for individuals, and small groups, helps to provide some time away from the busy home and helps young people to form appropriate friendships with their peers.</p> <p>Young people make significant progress, especially in their education. One young person has excelled, gaining a special recognition award from her college. The award stated, 'she has always given 100% effort in all practical subjects. Her theoretical input and written work has been graded up to distinction standard across the course.' Young people are rightly proud of their achievements and the staff team shares this. One member of staff said, 'we are so proud of her.' Bespoke education packages ensure all young people benefit from learning tailored to their needs and abilities. Staff support young people new to the home, educationally, if they do not have a current education placement and one is being sought. This helps to provide a culture where education and learning are of utmost importance.</p> <p>Each young person has a folder entitled 'journey' that shows all events relating to their education. It includes their educational history, plans, the goals they set, progress made, hurdles faced and issues they come across and how these are dealt with, and the work staff do to support and challenge them. Young people use these folders to complete monthly self-evaluations of their education. This provides a good overview of the educational progress and journey of the individual and promotes their confidence.</p> <p>A similar folder provides evidence of each young person's health journey. Detailed health plans identify the areas to address, and how staff will help young people improve their health. Appointments with medical professionals, befrienders, and key work sessions with staff enable young people to explore health issues and make progress in achieving healthy lifestyles. The emotional well-being of young people is of paramount importance. Many have very complex issues and a history of emotional trauma. Staff, specialist health workers, and health advocates provide support to enable young people to manage effectively their emotional health and</p> |                 |

to deal with difficult experiences. Young people utilise their folders to reflect on their development, one recorded, 'I am happy to know there is someone there for me when I am upset.' A health professional stated, 'they really seem to look after them here and you can tell they have the young people's best interests at heart. It feels a nice loving home.' This level of good support has led to a significant decrease in incidents of self-harm and improved young people's self-esteem.

Staff are trained in a variety of health matters and in the safe administration of medicines. Daily, weekly, and monthly audits of medication ensure practice is safe.

Young people enjoy a range of activities in and out of the home. These include activities such as swimming, ice skating, picnics in the park, walks and shopping. They engage in age appropriate activities, for example one young person is learning to drive. During the inspection, two young people were practicing putting tents up in preparation for a weekend camping trip. This provided them with an opportunity to learn new skills as well as creating an air of anticipation and excitement for the trip ahead.

Staff support and facilitate contact to ensure it is safe and enjoyable. Where arrangements change staff support young people to understand and manage their feelings. For many, contact has improved and includes overnight stays. This enables them to maintain good relationships with family and their community. Young people feel able to discuss with staff their cultural and individual identity preferences whilst respecting their family traditions and cultures. This helps young people to find a balance between understanding their background and culture whilst finding their own individuality within that.

Placements are generally well planned. Where information is limited or not provided in a timely manner, the manager effectively challenges those responsible to obtain as much information to ensure the placement is right for the young person. Wherever possible, young people are provided with information and a welcome pack prior to coming to the home. The manager and staff are aware that new people can be a potential trigger point for other young people and this can create negative behaviours and a period of uncertainty for those young people already in the home. Staff provide additional support and routines to manage this period sensitively to help minimise the impact of new placements.

Detailed and individualised care plans, devised with the young people, identify the aims of the placement and how these will be achieved. Daily living plans identify the routines and how care is provided on a daily basis. Regular, in depth, key work sessions provide opportunities for them to discuss any issues and work towards their targets. A simple colour code system helps young people to identify their progress and this promotes their confidence. One family member said, 'she has come on leaps and bounds, she is a lot happier in herself and I have no concerns about the home.'

Young people are able to share their views through key work sessions and in regularly held resident meetings. They share their views on staffing matters, décor, activities, garden equipment, and any concerns such as bullying. Their requests, if appropriate, are acted upon swiftly, for example, a range of garden equipment and activities were purchased prior to the summer. Young people also contribute to the ongoing reviews of the home development plan. This means they are involved in the daily running of the home and its future long-term developments.

Young people are prepared for moving on from the home. They learn a number of skills to help them understand what it is like to live independently. The registered manager liaises effectively with placing authorities to ensure placements change in the best interests of the young person and as smoothly as possible. Young people are able to move on, or in some cases return to their families, because of the stability this home has provided. One team manager from a placing authority said, 'this home has been a good stable consistent placement for her.'

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>'Young people need to feel safe and secure first in order to then develop and make progress in other areas'. This comment by a member of staff shows how important the safety of young people is to staff. A culture of warmth, protection and nurture enables young people to feel secure and helps them to build confidence in their own ability to keep themselves safe. This has resulted in a significant reduction in risk-taking behaviours such as going missing, and self-harm.</p> <p>Behaviour management plans and risk assessments highlight the individual risks and vulnerabilities of young people and how best to minimise these. A review and update of the assessments follows any incident, and any progress towards reducing the risk is recorded. Staff work well with a range of other professionals to ensure young people are kept safe. In particular, specific plans on the risk of sexual exploitation involve a wealth of input from other agencies ensuring a holistic approach to ensuring young people are safe and the risk of exploitation reduced as far as possible.</p> <p>Incidents of missing from home are very well managed. Risks are reduced because staff work hard providing information, using current publications and discussing the risks of going missing, in key work sessions. Staff benefit from training in managing absence and missing incidents and the manager has completed training to enable him to provide further learning on this subject to his staff team. Protocols and policies from each relevant local authority and the police provide an</p> |                 |

overview of the action to take in the event of an incident and ensures good partnership working. In addition, agreed, individual protocols shared with the local police reflect the individual vulnerabilities of each young person. Any absence or missing event is recorded in good detail. The actions taken by staff to locate the young person and to make contact with persons who may know their whereabouts, is robust. When found, police perform safe and well checks and an independent person visits to conduct a return interview. Any concerns that become known following missing episodes, such as sexual activity or drug and alcohol misuse, are referred as appropriate, and a range of professionals provides support to young people. One professional said, 'I do not have any major concerns about the missing episodes from this home.' The manager reviews all incidents to identify patterns and trends and trigger points that may help staff to further reduce the risks. Although there are a few incidents of missing, given the prolific history that some young people have, this is a significant improvement and testament to the hard work of the staff and young people in maintaining their safety.

Staff understand how to keep young people safe; they are well-trained and understand the procedures to follow in relation to safeguarding concerns and have a good relationship with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding. Investigations into any allegations are robust. Young people are kept informed and the regulator is notified as required.

There has been a reduction in bullying and any incidents are handled effectively. Work with individuals, and the group, helps young people to understand the expectations of group living and how to respond to any incidents. Some young people would prefer more work with individuals rather than in a group, believing this would cause less embarrassment for the victim of any bullying. The manager is aware of this and already looking at how best to implement this.

Consequences for negative behaviour are used effectively. They are discussed with the young person involved and often involve reparation such as a letter of apology. One such letter shows the young person has spent time reviewing and reflecting on her actions and identifies that she understands the consequences of her actions. Consequences are reviewed by the manager to ensure their longer-term effectiveness in changing behaviours.

Staff are trained in the use of restraint. It is rarely used and only when appropriate. Records contain all the relevant information including the young persons' and staff views on the incident, the hold and its effectiveness.

Maintenance is now carried out in a more timely manner, including any repairs, which provides for a nice homely environment for young people. Regular health and safety and fire checks ensure the building is safe. Young people and staff take part in regular fire drills ensuring they know what to do in event of an emergency.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>The registered manager is very experienced and has a range of qualifications and training relevant to the role. He has managed the home through some very difficult periods and has implemented a significant number of improvements that have transformed this home. Staff, young people, and other professionals respect him. One social worker reported, 'the young person now trusts the manager and will engage and sometimes confide in him.'</p> <p>All previous requirements and recommendations have been met and the manager has been able to sustain the improvements. There is now a strong, central core team of senior and experienced staff and managers. This helps young people form positive relationships. There has been a significant reduction in the use of agency staff which young people recognise as an improvement, one commented, 'I get on well with the staff, it is better with less agency staff.' The manager receives a range of support including regular, formal supervision. Staff also benefit from good supervision where they share their views and are appropriately challenged to improve their practice. Team meetings provide additional forums for discussion and a therapist provides monthly consultations to support the staff in their care of young people.</p> <p>Staff benefit from an extensive range of training. New staff also gain valuable experience working alongside more senior staff. One member of staff said, 'this home will provide the good experiences I want to help me grow and develop.'</p> <p>Internal and external monitoring systems are used to good effect. An independent visitor attends monthly to review the care and safety of young people and the manager promptly addresses any shortfalls identified. The progress of young people is monitored through the very good journey folders. The manager effectively monitors all events to analyse patterns and trends in order to identify where additional support or change in practice can benefit young people. Notifications of incidents are provided to Ofsted which enables effective monitoring by the regulator.</p> <p>The development plan for the home is clearly a useful working document. Regular reviews of the plans highlight areas that have progressed and areas that still require work. Young people and staff contribute to the regular reviews giving their ideas for future developments. This means the manager, staff, and young people can identify the strengths and areas for development for the home.</p> <p>Staff understand the ethos and purpose of the home, and the aims of the care they provide. One member of staff succinctly said, 'we are doing what we are meant to be doing.'</p> |                 |

The revised statement of purpose encompasses the wide range of support from other agencies. There is good work in partnership with these agencies and the manager effectively challenges where necessary. This ensures there is well-rounded care and support for young people to help young people progress. One young person summed up her experience stating, 'this home is amazing, it's been the best time of my life, it has really changed me.'

## 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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