

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC370956
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered provider address	Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Angela McKnight
Registered manager	Peter Gale
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	14/07/2016
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

SC370956

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The registered manager provides strong and effective leadership. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, with plans to address shortfalls.
- Young people make significant progress with regard to their emotional well-being and risk-taking activities. This means that young people feel safe. They have secure and trusting relationships with staff. They have people they can talk to about their anxieties and concerns.
- Staff are passionate, committed and enthusiastic about providing a good service for young people. They are either qualified or enrolled on an appropriate qualification.
- There are currently three staff vacancies, which means that agency staff are relied on to ensure appropriate staffing. This may have an impact on the attachments that young people can make with staff.
- Some young people have a home tutor. Staff also provide educational activities. However, these activities are not fully timetabled, which may make it difficult for young people to return to a more structured environment such as a school.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that every effort is taken to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- Ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, staff ensure that the child is supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/08/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people do not always arrive in a planned way, as the home accepts emergency admissions. However, young people are welcomed into the home and helped to settle in. A young person said: 'I felt welcomed' when she first arrived at the home. Young people generally get on well with each other, although there are sometimes disagreements. These are resolved quickly through discussion. A young person said: 'We're all encouraged to be like a family.' Young people make significant progress with regard to their emotional well-being and risk-taking behaviours. An independent reviewing officer said: 'Having reviewed the young person on many occasions, this is the first time I have seen her so relaxed and content.' Staff have a good understanding of the young people. They know when they may become anxious or upset. They know how to calm and reassure them. They have a child-centred, nurturing approach. A young person said about the staff: 'I have never known such outstanding people in my life, that understand you and listen to you.' Young people all have key workers who they say they like and who help them. A young person said: 'My key worker has supported me a lot emotionally and he has helped me cope with stress.' The emotional and physical health of young people is promoted. They have access to healthcare professionals, including mental health services. Psychological assessments are carried out for each young person and these help to formulate strategies with the guidance and support of a company therapist. Young people are encouraged to attend some form of education. One young person particularly enjoys her school and regularly attends. Other young people have either finished school and are looking for a college course to start in September, or have a home tutor while an education placement is found. Staff continue the work of tutors, and young people often respond positively to this work. However, there is little structure to the day. This means that young people may get up late for the school day or refuse to complete work. A social worker said that although she feels this is the young person's most stable placement, she feels that she spends too much time in the home and needs more structure. Furthermore, a more structured day will help young people to return to a school environment.	

Young people are consulted about their care and the running of the home. They say that they feel listened to by the staff. They attend regular house meetings where they can discuss things, such as any concerns they have, activities and decor for the house. They know how to make complaints. These are resolved quickly and effectively. They comment on their care plans and attend their statutory reviews.

Young people enjoy a range of activities, including educational activities, such as visits to the library. One young person researched Anne Frank at the library and wrote about her. Others enjoy construction toys, which support their mathematics and creativity. Leisure activities include walks, trips to the coast, cinema, bowling and skate-parks as well as football, the nail bar and the gym. The activities support young people's education as well as helping to build their confidence and self-esteem.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel safe living in this home. They have strong relationships with staff who they say they can talk to about any concerns they have. A young person said that staff help to keep her safe. Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and implement these effectively. Staff work positively with young people. They are nurturing and say humour helps young people to manage their behaviour positively. They know them very well and understand why they behave the way they do. They have strong relationships with them. This helps them to manage poor behaviour effectively. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort, and for some young people has not been used at all. For others, incidents requiring physical intervention have reduced as staff and young people get to know each other. Young people self-harm and put themselves at risk when they go missing from the home. However, they have made significant progress from their starting points. Incidents of missing from home and self-harm have significantly reduced. This is due to the strong, secure and trusted relationships young people have with most staff. Young people feel able to build attachments. However, the long-term use of agency staff to cover staff vacancies may disrupt these attachments and, therefore, the progress young people make. Young people have not taken illegal substances or drunk alcohol since moving to	

this home. Most young people do not smoke. This helps to keep young people healthy and safe.

The vetting procedures help to protect young people from unsuitable adults. Health and safety systems help to protect young people from hazards, including fire.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is very well qualified and experienced. He provides strong and supportive leadership, which both staff and young people appreciate. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the home, and has plans in place to address any shortfalls. Monitoring activities are used well to measure the effectiveness of the home. The registered manager said: 'I like a staff team that will challenge me. This keeps me and them safe and stops poor practice. The whole environment is about learning and development through constant reflection.' This reveals a manager who is responsive to his team and drives forward improvement. The home currently has three staff vacancies, which it has had for some time. Staffing the home sufficiently to meet the needs of the young people means that agency staff are used regularly. Mostly, the same agency staff are used to offer some consistency for young people, and some agency staff have gone on to become core members of staff. There is also an ongoing recruitment programme. However, the current situation has not ensured continuity of staff over a long period of time, which can disrupt young people's attachments. Staff are passionate, committed and enthusiastic about working with young people. The company is committed to providing a qualified workforce, and staff are either qualified or enrolled on an appropriate qualification. Staff complete a range of training, such as child sexual exploitation, self-injurious behaviour, safeguarding children and first aid. Staff also complete training, which has been developed by the company's psychologist and which addresses child development and attachment disorders. This developing staff team provides a good service for young people, helping to promote the health and well-being of young people. Staff work collaboratively with other professionals, including the local police and social workers. This helps to keep young people safe by providing a joined-up approach. A young person who has recently left the home, said: 'Thank you to all the staff,	

the manager and operations manager for supporting me through my pregnancy. Since I came here I have changed my life around and the home has made me an independent young lady.'

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 children looked after 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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