

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	29/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC370956
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered person address	Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Angela McKnight
Registered manager	Peter Gale
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	29/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.	
This home has experienced a period of change with two of the four young people moving on and two new young people moving in. There have also been some staffing changes and the registered manager is currently on sick leave. Despite these changes, young people continue to make progress, especially in building their confidence and developing emotional resilience. Young people grow in confidence and are better able to understand their past and to manage their feelings. This is because they have good relationships with staff and are learning about their emotional health. As a result, young people are making decisions about their contact arrangements and how to keep safe, and are exploring safe relationships. Young people continue to do well in their education and have aspirations for their future. Young people have successfully moved on from the home with the support of staff. Those new to the home have been made to feel welcome by staff and young people. Placements have been well planned to ensure that the mix of young people is right. Although there were some initial issues and negative behaviours, these have been swiftly and effectively managed. Young people understand the boundaries of group living and enjoy a more settled home. One young person said: 'It is much better here now, more settled. Staff do the best they can for us.' This settled and nurturing environment is underpinned by the implementation of a psychological model, which was recently adopted to improve the care provided. This encourages a whole-team approach and the use of reflective practice. Strategies for working with individual young people are identified, enabling staff to support them more effectively. Young people continue to be kept safe. Those who have lived here for a while have seen a reduction in incidents of missing from care, and subsequently a reduction in risks and concerns associated with sexual exploitation. There continue to be good working relationships with sexual exploitation teams, the police, drug and alcohol agencies and mental health specialists. This promotes young people's safety. Staff have identified a number of risks concerning young people recently	

placed here. These risks are well managed. Risk assessments are generally quite detailed, especially in relation to young people who go missing from home. They provide staff with clear strategies to protect young people. There are, however, some inconsistencies with regard to one risk assessment. This means that staff are not entirely clear how to manage activities safely. Staff are currently liaising with the placing authority to arrange a risk management meeting to clarify contact and free-time arrangements. This will help to protect the young person.

The use of physical intervention is rare. When it is used, it is appropriate and recorded. Staff and young people involved usually have a debriefing, but on one occasion an incident was witnessed by a young person who was not spoken to after the event. This means that they have not had the opportunity to share their views or any concerns.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and young people receive a range of rewards for progress in this area. Incidents of negative behaviour generate consequences that are recorded and negotiated with young people. However, the effectiveness of a sanction is not always recorded and, in some instances where it has been recorded as not effective, there is no record of any further action being taken. This does not assist staff or young people in understanding what works best to improve behaviour.

Since the last inspection there has been some use of agency staff. The home endeavours to use the same agency workers, ensuring some consistency for the young people. Staff have developed a range of skills and a better awareness of their responsibilities. They have improved their knowledge of positive interactions. The team are more confident in their abilities, and young people are well cared for as a result.

The deputy manager has taken on the responsibility of managing the home in the registered manager's absence. She has ensured that the shortfalls identified by the independent visitor on their monthly visits are addressed, and any backlogs in recording, staff supervisions, signing of records and managing of complaints have been rectified. She utilises a range of monitoring tools to identify the progress young people make, and to ensure that the quality of care is good.

Information about this children's home

This 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
12/08/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/08/2014	Full	Adequate
05/03/2014	Full	Good

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:

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair, and that the principles set out in paragraph 9.35 are respected. This is in relation to the monitoring of the effectiveness of sanctions and ensuring that all debriefs are carried out following interventions. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 9.36).

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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