

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	30/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC370956
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bettercare Keys Ltd
Registered provider address	The Keys Group, Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Kelly Looker
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Tracy Murty

Inspection date	30/01/2017
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 judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to make good progress in all areas of their lives from their starting points. Since the last inspection, a new manager has come into post. He has made an application to Ofsted to be registered and is awaiting a date to be interviewed. He has experience of working in similar settings as a deputy manager and has been well received by the staff team. A placing social worker for one young person also commended him on the positive changes they had seen in the young person since he came into post. One young person has left the home since the last inspection. This was not a planned discharge, but was handled sensitively by staff and managers. They worked closely with the placing authority and the young person to effect a move back to the area of the placing authority, which was at the express wishes of the young person. This shows that the wishes, views and feelings of young people have been considered and responded to by managers. One young person has remained in placement beyond their 18th birthday, with the agreement of Ofsted and the placing authority. There have been several delays in finding an appropriate adult provision and funding being secured for this young person. Staff and managers have worked closely and proactively with the placing authority to advocate for the young person. The young person has now had the opportunity to visit a new provision and has been supported by staff to seek local further educational provision, pending her move to her new accommodation. A new admission has very recently been made. This was planned and is progressing well. A suitable formal educational provision is currently being sought for this young person. During this inspection, the young person was taken to visit two potential mainstream school provisions. The other young people placed in this home have formal educational provisions in place and their attendance and engagement is positive. Following the last inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to ensuring that young people have structure to their day, when they do not have a formal educational provision in place. Staff and managers now ensure that each relevant young person has educationally focused work carried out with them each day. This is well recorded and reflects staff being committed to ensuring	

that young people focus on their learning needs.

Young people have access to a wide range of social activities in the local and wider community. Staff support them to participate in activities, such as skating, cinema trips, shopping and attending the gym. Staff also fully understand and support agreed contact plans with young people. This provides them with opportunities to maintain contact with family members and those significant to them. One young person stated that a relative has been able to visit the home and others also have had family members to visit them. This promotes their sense of being valued and includes those important to them in their care.

Staff and managers respond quickly and proactively to any missing from care incidents involving young people. Clear and detailed risk assessments are in place, which are regularly reviewed and updated. For some young people, there has been a significant reduction in the number of missing incidents, since they moved to live at this home. Staff work closely with the local police and follow relevant protocols and procedures to ensure young people's safe return. Managers have not ensured that placing authorities provide young people with an opportunity to have an independent return home interview, following any missing incidents. A manager from another of their children's homes currently undertakes return interviews. An independent interview would provide young people with the chance to discuss any concerns or issues they may have about their placement and care provided.

A number of allegations have been made about staff by young people since the last inspection. Managers have responded quickly and appropriately to all such allegations. There has been close working with placing authorities and referrals made to the designated officer when appropriate. Records do not fully reflect all actions and decisions taken by managers following allegations being made. There is a need for a more robust and detailed system of recording to be in place. There has been no apparent adverse impact on young people as a result of this shortfall.

Young people feel confident in being able to raise any concerns they may have about the care and support they receive in this home. One young person reported being happy with how any concerns or complaints they raised were responded to by the manager. Records considered during this inspection were variable in relation to their quality. Some young people receive full and formal responses to any complaints raised, but others looked at were not as detailed. There is a need to ensure that following any complaint being made by young people, they receive a detailed response from the manager as to actions taken. It is important that their views on the outcome of investigations into concerns raised by them is known and recorded by managers.

A recommendation was made at the last inspection in relation to the use of agency staff in this home. Since that inspection, new permanent staff have been recruited, reducing the need for using agency staff. Unfortunately, some of those staff have since left the home. This has necessitated the continued use of agency staff at times to cover permanent staff shortfalls. There is an ongoing recruitment drive for

this home and managers ensure that there is consistency of agency staff used. One agency staff member seen during this inspection praised the manager and staff team. They feel valued and reported liking the fact that they are asked to work at this home, as they have formed positive relationships with the young people. Staff rotas considered during this inspection reflect that managers endeavour to use the same agency staff whenever possible. Young people present as having positive relationships with both permanent and agency staff within the home.

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
14/07/2016	Full	Good
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/08/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	21/02/2017
Ensure that the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect provides for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; and describes the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (2)(d)(e))	21/02/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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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