

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	03/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC374268
Type of inspection	Full
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	Nicola Simmonds
Registered manager	Christine Matthews-Harvey
Inspector	Julia Wright

Inspection date	03/08/2016
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	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	Outstanding

SC374268

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive highly individualised care from a dedicated and committed staff team.
- Young people form good, trusting relationships with staff, which underpin good-quality care.
- Young people's needs are central to the running of the home and are reflected in their making good progress.
- Leadership and management are strong and set high standards for staff to follow.
- Managers and staff work in partnership with placing authorities, other professionals and young people's families, resulting in young people receiving good-quality, integrated care.
- Staff work well together to promote young people's needs.
- Young people enjoy a range of activities, reflecting their interests and preferences.
- Shortfalls include areas of the home needing improvement to maintain good standards for young people.

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

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard (2) In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must ensure that— (c) the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child.	30/09/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home offers medium- to long-term care for a maximum of three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A large national provider of children's residential services operates the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
27/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/12/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Good
Young people make good progress in many aspects of their lives, because they benefit from well-planned and managed care that is closely monitored. The service that they receive is flexible and adapts to their changing needs. Staff work very well together. They prioritise making positive and trusting relationships with each young person in their care. One young person said, 'I am happy here. No problems. Everything is great.' Another said, 'I am fine here, settling in. I am doing OK.' A parent said, 'Staff are very helpful, and they contact me regularly. They ask my advice and work with me for his benefit.' Since the last inspection, there have been changes at the home, with young people leaving to go to new placements and other young people arriving. A social worker said, 'The manager and staff really helped him with his transition to his new placement. It made things a lot easier for him.' New young people receive a warm welcome from staff to the home, and staff help them to understand the home's rules and the boundaries in place to safeguard all young people. Young people are involved in all aspects of their care in the home. They talk to staff about what they enjoy doing in their spare time and about managing their free time. They are confident in approaching staff, and know that adults are interested in their views and take notice of them. Some young people are new to the home and school placements are being sought for them. There is a strong culture in the home of promoting education. The registered manager and staff are extremely proactive in making sure that all possible avenues are explored, so that all young people have school placements to move to as soon as possible. While waiting for these to be arranged, young people who are not at school have full-time tutors at the home, provided by local authorities. This means that all young people have opportunities to learn and develop in line with their age and stage of development. When young people are not able to engage with their education, this is speedily escalated to the young person's professional network where strategies to improve this issue are agreed. Consequently, young people's progress is constantly reviewed and monitored, and options considered. Another young person at the home is making good progress with his education and has completed school exams, and is waiting to start at further education college. Young people embrace opportunities to progress with their lives. Young people enjoy good health, and they keep fit and well. They receive good	

primary healthcare services that ensure that their needs are prioritised. When more specialised services are required, staff ensure that these are in place. Staff talk to young people about lifestyle choices, including smoking and drug use, which helps to educate them about risks to their health and well-being.

Young people are encouraged to develop age-appropriate skills and they help with chores around the home, including meal preparation and keeping their rooms clean. Young people personalise their own rooms, fostering a sense of ownership and belonging.

Relationships between young people, their families and friends are supported and valued by staff. Young people continue to see their family, wherever possible, ensuring that they maintain important relationships with their loved ones, and have an understanding of their backgrounds and their identities.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Managers and staff work well together to support young people's behaviour. Staff are skilled in de-escalating situations and helping young people to develop the ability to self-regulate their behaviour. Physical interventions are rare, as good communication between staff and young people helps most young people to manage their behaviour appropriately. Clear boundaries, applied consistently by the staff team, help young people to understand the expectations for their behaviour. This means that young people are supported to develop socially acceptable behaviour and understand how to interact with others in the community, improving their citizenship skills. Managers and staff are responsive to young people's safety. For example, when young people struggle to manage their behaviour, presenting risks to other young people, managers and staff escalate their concerns to other professionals and devise strategies to try and to improve the situation. Consequently, young people's safety improves as professionals work together to resolve difficulties. One social worker said, 'The home is excellent in how it deals with safeguarding incidents.' There have been a number of occasions when young people have been away from the home without permission. Staff work closely with the young people to highlight the risks and dangers of being away from the home when adults do not know where they are. Young people's understanding of risks and dangers improves. Key-work sessions with young people are undertaken frequently, and are well recorded by staff, reflecting important discussions with them about topics such as drugs, missing from care, relationships and their reflections on settling into the home. Young people are supported to tell adults if they are worried about any aspect of their life, improving their overall safety.	

Effective working relationships with local police mean that a strong network of support is available to young people. Police visit the home, helping to break down barriers as young people become familiar with their presence and have more understanding of their role in the community.

Young people's safety is further promoted by the appropriate vetting of staff. There are thorough recruitment processes in place which mean that young people are protected from adults who may wish to harm them.

Young people benefit from living in a home which has a safe and secure environment. Regular safety checks ensure that equipment works well and presents no risks to young people. Fire drills are regularly undertaken in line with organisational policy, and all young people are conversant with the need to evacuate from time to time, maintaining vigilance and thus safety for all.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been in post since 2012. She has a level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential childcare. The registered manager is extremely committed to providing high-quality care for young people and ensuring that they continue to make progress in line with their plans. She provides strong leadership, and continually appraises the overall functioning of the home to provide the best possible environment for young people to grow and develop. The registered manager has an exceptionally clear focus on the needs of each young person in her care and the steps that she and the staff must take to ensure that progress for each young person is achieved. Team meetings and supervision sessions are forums where young people's achievements and difficulties are identified. The registered manager is highly effective in proactively escalating concerns that she and the staff team have about young people. The registered manager liaises with local authorities and other professionals, including therapists, if young people are unable to adhere to boundaries, for example, and place themselves and others at risk of harm. She organises professionals meetings so that a multi-agency approach is identified to help young people to address their difficulties and make progress, or to make decisions about whether the home is able to meet specific needs. This helps to prevent young people facing crises, and avoids drift and delay in meeting young people's needs. Staff say that they are very well supported. All staff receive regular supervision, enabling them to reflect on the welfare of young people and on their own professional development. When staff are in post for more than 12 months, they have an annual appraisal to identify progress and areas for development or improvement. All staff undertake regular training, including courses specific to the	

needs of the young people whom they care for, for example young people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. All staff have a level 3 diploma in caring for children and young people in residential care, are enrolled on the course, or will undertake it upon completion of their probationary period. Consequently, young people are cared for by staff who have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet young people's needs.

The home is operating according to its statement of purpose. The registered manager is comprehensively aware of the strengths and areas of development for the service. Development areas include new staff being assigned 'buddies' to help them to learn their role, improving the physical environment of the home, and working with staff to change aspects of the culture of the home, for example helping young people to manage choice and decision making in line with their age and stage of development. The registered manager is enthusiastically committed to ensuring that the service continues to evolve and develop for the benefit of the young people in her care. Her strong and insightful awareness of the home's performance and young people's progress allows her to act without any delay.

Independent monitoring visits occur monthly and the registered manager keenly welcomes scrutiny and oversight. She prepares self-monitoring reports and submits these to Ofsted, outlining patterns, trends and proposals to meet any deficits that she identifies in the running of the home.

A recommendation made at the last inspection is met, as fence panels in the garden have been replaced and new sofas purchased for young people's use. There are additional areas of the home that need attention to ensure that the home remains a comfortable and homely space for young people. These include the damaged paintwork at the back of the home, damage to the kitchen units, sofas which have holes in them and areas where decorating has not been completed. Staff involve young people in maintaining and decorating the home, whenever possible. For example, one new young person helped staff to complete the decorating in the games room, and it looks a vibrant, clean space for them to enjoy their time there.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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