

# SC374268

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 13 December 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 22 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people enjoy warm, trusting and supportive relationships with staff, which helps them to make good progress.
- Managers and staff are determined to make a positive difference to young people's

lives.

- Young people's wishes and feelings are taken into account in the development of the home.
- Young people are encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills.
- Staff help young people to maintain regular contact with family members.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some aspects of the home's physical environment require improvement.
- The manager does not have a workforce development plan.
- Young people's case records sometimes do not include copies of the placing authority's plans.
- Managers do not make sure that independent return home interviews take place after a young person has been missing from care.
- Staff do not have the necessary knowledge of autistic spectrum disorder, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety.
- Managers do not always make sure that serious safeguarding incidents are notified to HMCI within 24 hours.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 22/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 03/08/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 14/03/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 03/11/2015      | Full            | Good                    |

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The protection of children standard is that the registered person must ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(2)(d)) | 02/03/2018 |
| The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33(4)(a))<br><br>This is in relation to training to raise awareness of autistic spectrum disorder, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety.    | 30/03/2018 |
| The registered person must ensure that records include a copy of any plan for the care of the child, prepared by the child's placing authority, and of the placement plan. (Regulation 36 Schedule 3(19))                                                               | 26/01/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Ensure that there is a workforce plan in place which can fulfil the requirements of Regulation 16 Schedule 1. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulation 5(c)). ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- 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 must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of the 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)

- Ensure that there is a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.5)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress as a result of living at the home. Young people are positive about their experiences and their relationships with staff. One young person told the inspector, 'I have quite a lot of jokes with the staff. It feels relaxed and homely here.' The registered manager and staff work hard to create and maintain a warm and friendly atmosphere. This helps young people to feel secure and gives them a sense of stability and belonging.

The registered manager ensures that young people benefit from a consistent and family-orientated approach to care. For example, staff use mealtimes as social occasions and take every opportunity to do shared activities with young people in the home and in the community. Young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills and are able to do their own laundry, prepare food, clean and travel independently. This helps build young people's sense of identity, their confidence and self-esteem.

Staff take young people's education seriously. Staff ensure that young people have good daily routines and receive lots of encouragement to attend school.

Staff support young people to access the services that they need to maintain good health. For example, staff have ensured that young people have access to specialist services such as substance misuse services. This help has enabled one young person to formulate a plan to avoid exposure to drugs in the future. He has also been proactive in sharing his learning to educate his friends about the dangers of taking drugs.

For young people who are placed outside of their home area, staff recognise the importance of making sure that they stay in touch with family and friends. As a result, staff help young people to maintain good relationships with people who are important to them. For example, one young person has been able to re-establish a relationship with his uncle and now enjoys spending regular good-quality time with him. Another young person enjoys the opportunity to spend time with his family, friends and previous carers. Keeping in touch with people who are significant in their lives helps young people to maintain good emotional health and a sense of identity.

Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedroom. The home has benefited from some recent improvements to the physical environment, with the kitchen and the young people's bathroom having been refitted. However, despite this, a few areas of the house still require attention.

For example, wallpaper to the bathroom ceiling appears damp, painting to the walls in the laundry is patchy, and wallpaper under the stairs is coming away. Splashbacks in the kitchen need cleaning.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff. Expectations are clear and staff encourage positive behaviour by using rewards. When there have been negative behaviours, consequences are appropriately used. For example, a young person temporarily lost the opportunity to travel in the home's car. Nurturing relationships and staff skill in de-escalation mean that physical intervention is rarely required. Detailed plans help staff to understand, minimise and manage risks to young people. An effective approach to managing behaviour and risk means that risk-taking and offending behaviours reduce. A social worker told the inspector, 'They give the young people options and try to use an approach which is restorative. The biggest factor in the young people not re-offending is the care the home provides. I am impressed with the services they have provided.'

The young people like to spend time at the home and going-missing-from-home episodes are now infrequent. When young people do go missing from care, staff are proactive in looking for them and trying to keep in contact with them. However, when young people return home, they do not have the opportunity of an independent return home interview. This means that opportunities to understand why a young person went missing and to use this information to reduce risk are lost.

Young people have individual agreements regarding access to the internet relevant to their care plans. Parental controls and staff vigilance when young people are online help to promote their safety. Good relationships with the police have resulted in police officers visiting the home to discuss issues such as 'sexting' with the young people. This has increased young people's understanding of online safety and the legal implications of inappropriate use of the internet.

A young person shared with the inspector, 'I feel safe. The staff know how to keep me safe. They have training to keep us safe. I personally believe they know how to keep us safe.'

Staff benefit from a range of learning opportunities to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including training in safeguarding, physical intervention and the administration of medication. There are no young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and staff have received training to help them understand the risks that young people can face from grooming. However, staff have not had the opportunity to complete training in the areas of online safety and 'Prevent'. This means that they are less informed about how to keep young people safe from the risks presented by social media and radicalisation.

The manager and staff try hard to consider young people's views in the development of

their care. Regular key-working sessions and weekly young people's meetings explore topics such as bullying and diversity. Young people are clear who they would speak to if they had a concern. A young person has complained and he reported that this was resolved in a timely way and to his satisfaction. Young people were eager to tell the inspector about how their views had changed the home. One young person shared, 'Young people agreed on getting a pool table and that happened. They got us a TV for in the games room and a boxing bag and gloves for outside. They painted the lounge. I do get listened to. If I ask for something, it generally gets done unless it's illegal or stupid.'

The manager ensures that staff receive training in health and safety and that safety checks are regularly completed and that fire safety systems are maintained in good working order.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The manager has been in post since January 2017, becoming the registered manager in September 2017. She is suitably qualified, holding a level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care and children and young people's services. The manager has the support of an appropriately experienced and qualified deputy manager. In addition to the managers, there are 10 members of staff. Of these, three hold the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. Six staff are enrolled on the award and are due to complete within required timescales.

Managers are passionate about making a positive difference to young people's lives. Staff report that they receive regular good-quality supervision and appraisal that helps them to think reflectively about their practice and encourages them to try different approaches. Staff describe managers as supportive. One member of staff shared with the inspector, 'We have formal supervision but we don't have to store up our grievances. We can have a chat with the manager whenever we need to.' Regular staff meetings help to develop team working and consistent practice. A member of the team told the inspector, 'We have a really good team, everyone is different, and everyone has something new. They are enthusiastic and flowing with ideas about how to improve things. Fresh ideas. I feel uplifted by them.' Vetting of potential staff prior to them commencing work at the home helps to ensure that young people are not exposed to unsuitable adults.

Staff have access to a range of mandatory training, which supports their development. However, despite it being relevant to one young person's care plan, some staff have not had the opportunity for development in the area of autistic spectrum disorder. In addition, the manager has not developed a workforce plan. This means that the learning and development needs of individuals and the team may go unnoticed and be unmet.

Staff report that they feel confident about how to report safeguarding and whistleblowing concerns. However, notifications to Ofsted about significant incidents are not sent within the required timescales. Omissions in notifying leave professionals without essential information to ensure that appropriate action is being taken.

The registered manager works hard to build relationships with relevant professionals including social workers, educators, the police, youth offending teams and substance misuse services to support young people's care planning. A social worker shared with the inspector, 'The manager communicates effectively and in a timely manner in terms of any issues.' However, the registered manager does not always challenge other agencies if young people do not have the support and services they need. For example, one young person has not had his health assessment review within the required timescale and there has been no follow-up or challenge to the social worker. In addition, the manager has not made sure that the home has all of the required statutory documentation for the young people on their records. These shortfalls mean that information is lacking and young people may not have access to services or support that they need.

The manager makes good use of the information from monthly independent monitoring visits and reviews the quality of care on a quarterly basis to help her identify the strengths and development areas for the service. The home has a clear statement of purpose, which provides useful information to those that refer to it about the services and support available.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC374268

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Bettercare Keys Limited

**Registered provider address:** Laganwood House, Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

**Responsible individual:** David Carser

**Registered manager:** Gayle Heaton

## Inspector

Alison Cooper, social care inspector



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