

SC429011

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The service is run by a large private organisation that operates a range of services nationally. This home is one of a group of six that make up a cross-regional project commissioned by six local authorities to provide a residential service for children and young people within their local area.

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people living at the home may attend a school also run by the same provider and have access to in-house therapeutic support.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 January 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:

- Children develop strong relationships with staff, who nurture them effectively.
- There is child-centred care planning which children are involved in developing.
- Children have reduced the frequency of, and in some cases stopped, going missing.
- Children are in education, training or employment.
- Children participate in interesting and educational activities.
- Children like living in the home and feel safe.
- The home is well managed by a competent manager.
- The manager and staff have good working relationships with external professionals involved in children's lives.
- Staff are committed to supporting children to develop the skills they need to live a fulfilled life.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager has not reviewed the use of door alarms on children's bedroom doors.
- The statement of purpose does not fully comply with regulations.
- The manager does not include stakeholders' views in her six-monthly monitoring reports.
- Some elements of children's care plans and risk assessments have not been updated.
- A medication review was not held for a child who was refusing his medication.
- Some repairs to the building have not been carried out promptly.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/07/2016	Full	Good
07/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/11/2015	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, 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 registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, review the use of alarms on children's bedroom doors.	31/10/2017
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1))	31/10/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(5))	31/10/2017
The registered person must without delay notify HMCI of all significant events in the home, as defined in the corresponding regulation. (Regulation 40(4))	31/10/2017

Recommendations

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

- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home.
(‘Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, para 14.3)
In particular, all information contained in the home's care plans should be kept

up to date and a record made when actions identified in key-work sessions have been followed up.

- Children's homes staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day to day health and well-being. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, para 7.10) In particular, staff should ensure that children attend health appointments and, if a child refuses prescribed medication, that this is reviewed by a medical professional.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 41, para 9.5). In particular, staff should ensure that all risk assessments are updated as children's needs change.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, para 3.9) In particular, the registered person should ensure that repairs to the premises are carried out without delay.
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, para 15.1)

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are helped to settle in to the home. Any anxieties that children have about coming to live in the home are reduced because staff meet them and talk to them about what they can expect from living in the home. Children come and visit the home and meet staff and the other children before they move in. Children are treated with dignity and respect by staff who listen to their views. Children settle well into life in the home.

Children quickly develop very strong and trusting relationships with the staff. These relationships form the basis for the success of the work with children.

Children are fully involved in their care planning, which is geared towards them taking more responsibility for their actions. Care planning is informed by psychological assessments and it is child centred. The plans cover all of the child's needs and form the basis for each child's care. Some sections of the plans have not been updated in a timely way.

Children talk to their key-worker on a regular basis about a range of things. These discussions provide children with the time and space to talk about their wishes and feelings. The recording of some key-work sessions is incomplete. For example, actions identified at one session are not recorded as having been followed up in subsequent meetings. It is not clear whether the actions have been met or whether they have been effective.

All of the children currently living in the home have made significant progress in many areas of their lives. For example, children are safer because they have stopped running away. The progress they have made is a direct result of the child-centred care planning, the nurture they receive and their own hard work to make changes in their lives.

All children have made progress in education, training or employment. They have developed aspirations for their futures and are well supported by staff to work towards achieving these. Some children are in part-time employment and have developed a good work ethic.

Children are supported to attend all routine and specialist appointments relating to their physical or emotional health. Despite staff encouraging children to get to appointments, some choose not to attend. One child had refused to attend a check-up appointment and staff had not rescheduled this. This child had also been refusing to take their medication for a significant length of time and staff had not managed to arrange a medication review.

An area of work that has a very positive impact on children's experience and progress is the attention and support given to ensuring that children take part in activities that they are interested in and that are purposeful. From these, they learn new skills, develop responsibility for themselves and have fun with each other and independently.

Children, with the support of staff, are developing skills they will need to live successful and independent lives. Some are skilled at cooking for themselves and are learning budgeting skills.

When there have been problems with family relationships, children and their families are supported well by staff to work through these. Staff understand the emotional impact relationship problems can have on children and work skilfully to limit this. Children and their parents develop healthier relationships as a result of this work.

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

Children feel safe and are safe living in this home. They feel able to confide in staff. One young person said that staff 'are like a new family'. Children feel that staff listen to them and take action when needed.

A safe recruitment process ensures that staff are suitably vetted and therefore

appropriate people to work with the children.

Children are safer than they were before they lived in the home. For example, the management of risk has been highly effective in stopping one child going missing and putting herself at significant risk. She said, 'The trust they (the staff) gave me made me want to change. No other care home has ever believed in me before and here I got the incentive I needed to stop.' When children do go missing, a well-coordinated approach is taken to bringing them home to safety. All of the young people living in the home had alarms set on their bedroom doors overnight to alert staff if they left their room. As children are no longer going missing frequently, the use of these requires review. While the approach to risk management is strong, not all risk assessments had been updated when needs or circumstances had changed.

Since the last inspection, there have been incidents of bullying. These were taken very seriously by staff. Due to the particularly nasty sustained nature of these incidents, some children were moved on from the home. This safeguarded the children left living in the home. Lessons have been learned from this situation.

When children misuse substances, this is taken very seriously by staff. Services are made available to children and key-work sessions undertaken with them to highlight the dangers to their health and the legal implications to them of substance misuse. While children are not engaging in this work currently, the current patterns of drug use are low and opportunistic.

Children develop appropriate coping strategies, because the behaviour management strategies are effective. There is a focus on restorative practice and this helps children to develop more effective reasoning skills and empathy for others.

There have been no safeguarding issues since the last inspection. Staff understand their duty in relation to dealing with any child protection or safeguarding concerns.

Staff understand the benefits and the dangers to children of the use of the internet and social networking. An appropriate balance is achieved between children being able to access the internet and communicate with friends while keeping themselves safe.

The environment is safely maintained. However, some maintenance issues are not dealt with in a timely way and this detracts from the otherwise good quality of care.

The manager has carried out an assessment of the home's location. This has not been developed in line with the statutory advice. The assessment has been reviewed but does not include up-to-date crime figures. There is no analysis of the risks that the location may pose to the children, so these are not considered when compatibility risk assessments are carried out.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home is managed effectively by an experienced and competent manager. The manager is committed and passionate about improving the lives of children.

The work of the home is underpinned by a statement of purpose. This clearly states the aims and objectives of the home but does not include all information required under

regulation.

The manager has a good understanding about the home's strengths and areas for development. She gains this through her, and the independent visitor's, regular monitoring activities. There is a current development plan to further improve the quality of care. The manager has not sought the views of stakeholders in her monitoring, so these important views have not been considered in the planned developments. The manager has met the requirements made at the last inspection.

The manager did not notify Ofsted of a significant event. This means that the regulator was unable to fulfil its statutory duties. However, appropriate action was taken by the manager to safeguard children.

The manager has established good working relationships with other agencies and professionals. This ensures that children's needs are planned for and met effectively. The manager appropriately challenges agencies that are not fulfilling their duties effectively.

Staff share the manager's passion to help children to progress in their lives. They are well supported by the manager through regular supervision and team meetings and they report that peer support is good. There have been some changes in the staff team and these have been well managed so that any disruption to children's attachments has been minimised. Established staff are competent and confident and are supporting new staff well to develop their skills. The organisation invests in staff training and all longstanding staff have achieved at least a level 3 qualification in caring for children.

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 difference 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. Whenever 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 and 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: SC429011

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bettercare Keys Ltd

Registered provider address: The Keys Group, Laganwood House, Newforge Lane, Belfast BT9 5NW

Responsible individual: Emma Beech

Registered manager: Zoe Tompkins

Inspector

Rosie Dancer, social care inspector

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