

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	25/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC429011
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	BetterCare Keys Limited
Registered person address	Laganwood House, 44 Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5NW

Responsible individual	Emma Beech
Registered manager	Zoe Tompkins
Inspector	Trish Palmer

Inspection date	25/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC429011

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have built good relationships with a dedicated staff team.
- Staff are committed to working with the young people.
- Young people say they feel safe living in the home.
- Staff recognise that transitions for young people can be difficult and support them during this time.
- Young people are supported in maintaining friendships in the community.
- Staff understand the importance of education and there are good links with school.
- Young people are encouraged to be involved in their placement plan.
- The home keeps families and social workers updated on young people's progress.
- The home is warm and welcoming and young people are clearly at the heart of the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
14/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
04/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The young people have developed good relationships with a stable dedicated staff team. Two young people are new to the home but say that they like the staff and can talk to them. One commented, 'I like my key worker she listens and does stuff for me.' A social worker commented, 'since being in the placement, X has been able to progress emotionally and been able to look at her feelings and where she wants to be. She isn't good at trusting adults and staff have worked hard with her to build trusting relationships with them.' The young people have good informative care plans which enable staff to support them in all aspects of their lives. They are encouraged to read, comment upon and sign their plans. They are also discussed in keywork sessions so that the young people are aware of any changes. Young people have regular key work sessions, these are individualised and discuss day-to-day issues, behaviours and positive achievements. Staff use different ways of completing key work sessions: some young people find it easier to talk when out in the car and staff adapt to the needs of the young person. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the young people, why they are in care, and what their current needs are. Staff respect and value the young people and treat them as individuals. There are many photos around the home of staff and young people. The home recently had a fun day and invited young people and staff from their sister homes in the area. The manager has had a book especially made containing photos from the day; this gives young people positive memories of their time in the home. One young person has made a scrapbook of her time in the home. There are framed chalkboards outside each young person's room where staff leave messages for young people, one young person who recently moved in still has his welcome message from staff on the board as he said that it was nice. The young people have a reward system in place, which is individual to them setting out targets and goals. These are monitored and amended by staff on a regular basis. Staff complete a positive consequence book which the young people comment and sign. The manager had looked at giving young people certificates	

but due to their ages, they said that they do not like them; instead, they receive cards from staff congratulating them, which they prefer.

The young people's health needs are well promoted and supported by staff. They are registered with the local GP, opticians and dentist and supported to attend routine health appointments. The looked after children's nurse completes annual health assessments. Staff support young people to access specialised services such as sexual health and drug and alcohol. Health issues are also discussed in key work sessions and young people's meetings.

Staff understand the importance of young people maintaining positive friendships in the community and actively encourage and support this, one young person has a friend that visits the home and they have had overnights at each other houses. Another young person travels by train several times a week to meet up with his friends.

Staff have developed good relationships with parents, one commented, 'the staff always contact me if there's a problem, we have been to the house; staff showed us around and X showed us his room. It's a lovely home and the staff look after him well'. A social worker commented, 'X is happy in the home and the placement is meeting his needs, communication is good and they deal with any issues efficiently.'

Staff actively seek and act on young people's wishes, feelings and opinions about the home. Issues are discussed in young people's meetings, which the manager reads and replies to. The staff have created a 'you asked we did' board showing that staff have listened and acted.

Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms; a young person who recently moved to the home was proud to show what he had purchased for his room with his key worker. A young person helps staff with the garden and has planted strawberries, raspberries and potatoes and an herb garden.

Staff see education as an important part of the young people's lives. There is good communication between school and home, the headteacher commented, 'I met with the manager recently to look at how we can work together in supporting a young person in school; so far this appears to be working well.' The home sends an email every morning to school informing them of the young person's evening and any issues, school send an email to the home every afternoon so staff are aware of the day they have had. A weekly report is also sent by school. One young person, who is finding it difficult to settle in school, is accompanied by a member of staff who stays with him for the day. This has helped him to settle and maintain school attendance.

Young people are encouraged and supported with independence skills according to their ability and level of understanding. The home has an independence package

that young people can use with support from their keyworkers.

Staff understand the importance of family contact, a parent commented, 'the home supports X with contact, its going really well and has increased recently.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The home challenges all forms of bullying and discrimination, although this is not an issue with the current group. Young people are encouraged to talk about feelings towards each other during young people's meetings, particularly if any behaviours have had an impact on the group. They were able to discuss the impact of a young person who had caused damage in the home had had on them in an open safe environment. There are good, clear and concise individual risk assessments in place which are reviewed by the manager, all staff have signed these to say that they have read and understood the risks. These are also discussed in staff meetings and updated when needed. The young people live in a safe environment, all health and safety checks are up to date, any extra measures such as bedroom door alarms are understood by the young people, families and social workers and a consent form is signed and on file. Staff have undertaken child sexualised exploitation (CSE) training along with harmful behaviours of children in order to recognise concerns and safeguard the young people. The manager completes an impact risk assessment as part of the referral process; there is evidence that she has turned down referrals due negative impacts or safeguarding concerns with young people in placement. Senior managers have supported her decisions. There is a clear area risk assessment in place which is regularly reviewed. Staff understand the impact of a new young person coming into the home can have and will inform the current group of any new admissions as soon as possible. The young people have been involved in writing the rules for the house giving them some ownership. These are also revisited in young people's meetings.	

Young people are given a copy of the young person's guide on admission, this gives young people information about how to complain, they are also given a copy of their placing authorities complaints procedure. There is a notice board next to the young people computer displaying contact details for an advocacy service, Ofsted and the children's commissioner. There have been no complaints since the last full inspection. The young people spoken to say that they feel safe, and know how to make a complaint.

The home has good links with the local police community support officer. He regularly visits the home joining in on activities such as baking with the young people; this has helped to build a positive relationship.

The manager attends a monthly meeting involving other local children's home providers and police, where issues such as CSE and crime hot spot areas are discussed which further safeguard the young people. The local authority and police are informed of all admissions and discharges in the home.

The home has a robust missing from home policy, all young people also have an individual protocol, which staff follow if young people go missing. Staff spoken to are very clear on both protocols. They will actively search for young people in the local area, on their return, they are welcomed back to the home, and will do a return to home interview to ensure that the young person is ok and to try and establish where they have been. An independent interview is completed by Barnardo's Are you Safe (RUS) team. A parent commented, 'X was running away a lot from his last placement but has only gone missing once since moving to the home. Staff went out to look for him and kept me updated. I think he is much safer here than he was before.' A social worker commented, 'X was absconding up to seven times a week in his last placement as he wasn't happy. He has settled in well and only absconded once; they follow the missing protocol.'

The manager had concerns that a newly admitted young person may try to abscond to see his friends; he has been moved over two hours travel time from his friends. Due to his age and level of understanding, the manager discussed with his social worker her concerns, it has been agreed that he can travel independently three times a week to maintain contact with them. This has worked well, he remains in contact with staff and is back on time. Staff support young people to learn how to manage appropriate risks in order to keep themselves safe.

Staff understand the risks young people may experience through access to the internet. Due to the remote location of the home young people cannot always get signal on their phones, they do have access to Wi-Fi in the home. They are regularly spoken to in young people's meetings and key work sessions about the risks of using the internet. RUS have also completed work about internet safety. Staff have undergone training regarding young people having access to the internet. The young people's computer has appropriate security measures and inappropriate sites have been blocked.

A safeguarding incident which occurred over the summer was reported to all the appropriate professionals. The social worker for both young people involved commented, 'the staff worked really well with both young people, all young people were affected in some way and they worked well with them all. They supported X in a very caring professional way. They reported this appropriately and worked with other professionals, they were very proactive'.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The manager has been registered since July 2014 but has worked in the home for a number of years. She has the relevant experience and qualifications and is passionate about the work of the home and the outcomes for young people. The home has a strong core group of staff who have worked in the home for a number of years. They have a good insight into the young people needs and behaviours and support them in all aspects of their lives. The manager and staff have high aspirations for the young people to achieve their full potentials. A social worker commented, 'I have no concerns about the placement; they are very supportive of X.' Another commented, 'there are consequences to negative behaviours but they really focus on the positives, they want to inspire them to do better and their plans are individualised and relevant to their need.' The home plots progression from admission, this is put into graph form once a month so that it is easy to recognise progression or when things are declining. They can also be shown to the young people so they can see for themselves how well they are doing. Staff receive monthly supervision, a member of staff commented, 'supervision is really supportive, we also have a reflection log that we complete in between and take to discuss in supervision, we are a close staff team and will often talk through issues with each other if we need to.' Appraisals are up to date; a personal development plan is drawn up with staff and discussed regularly in supervision. The manager receives monthly supervision from the operations manager.	

Staff meetings are held weekly, young people are discussed and the homes therapist also attends once a month. The manager also has good links with the homes consultant child adolescence psychiatrist and clinical psychologist who support staff in working with the young people.

The home has good links with the local authority designated officer who reported that there are no concerns and the home reports concerns appropriately.

Staff are up to date with all mandatory training and have also undertaken training around harmful behaviours, ADHD and autism.

Daily records are clear and concise; there are separate recordings for contact and health appointments so these can be easily monitored.

The young people are involved in completing their care plans, this means that they understand the work being undertaken and have ownership of plans and decision made.

The manager is confident in raising issues with other professionals if she feels that plans in place are not working or not in the best interest of the young person and there is evidence that she has been able to do this effectively.

Recruitment is robust; all checks are completed before staff can begin work in the home. A record of disclosures, gaps in employment and reference verifications are kept by the manager. The young people's forum have devised questions that they would like asked during the interview process, the home is looking at how young people can become more involved during the interview process.

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

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