

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	19/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC063883
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	Christine Bird
Registered manager	Mumtaz Sodha
Inspector	Tina Ruffles

Inspection date	19/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>No young people have left the home since the last inspection. There have been no new admissions.</p> <p>Young people have mixed experiences. Some continue to make significant progress in many areas of their lives. One young person said, 'It's going alright. I'm coming home, not going missing and am in school now.'</p> <p>The staff team's encouragement and practical support has led to some improvement in young people's engagement in education. There is increased attendance at school and young people are participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. This helps to reinforce young people's confidence and self-esteem. Staff work with professionals to maximise young people's educational potential. This leads to more opportunities for young people to obtain exam qualifications.</p> <p>All young people continue to have good, trusting relationships with most staff and benefit from improved relationships with each other. This has been influential in the development of peer friendships, and young people's friends now visit them at the home. Young people have improved social skills and the good relationships that they establish make significant contributions to their emotional well-being and sense of identity.</p> <p>Staff have challenged young people about their food choices. They encourage young people to eat well-balanced meals but receive mixed reactions to this. Young people still prefer eating processed food. Staff are persistent in promoting a healthy lifestyle. They encourage attendance at medical appointments, but young people sometimes refuse to attend.</p> <p>There has been no need for physical intervention and there have been very few incidents of negative behaviour. The manager has been proactive and has recognised inconsistencies in practice in respect of incentives and consequences. A new system has been put in place to offer consistency and fairness to young people, who had voiced they were being treated differently. This also encourages</p>	

positive behaviour.

All young people are now at a reduced risk of child sexual exploitation. There are fewer missing-from-care episodes, as young people negotiate extensions on their agreed time out with friends instead of being absent without warning. Staff are proactive in ensuring that they know young people's whereabouts and their peer groups. They have also empowered young people to keep themselves safe in the community by remaining in contact with the home. Staff protect and keep young people safe through their vigilance and their role in the development of young people's self-protection skills.

Staff support young people to develop independent living skills but receive mixed responses to this. The reward system that is implemented by staff is effective in encouraging some young people to develop essential practical skills for when they leave the home.

Staff provide young people with numerous opportunities to voice their views and opinions about the running of their home. Young people know how to make complaints. External managers deal with these effectively. Complaints are resolved in a timely fashion. This independent involvement provides transparency. Young people feel listened to and independent advocates ensure that their voices are heard within care planning processes.

One young person has disengaged from the home and from education. She spends all her free time away from the home, only returning at night. This young person voiced that she wants to live independently. Staff are actively working to re-engage this young person with the home.

The manager is still effective in running the home, but has had some recent absences from the home. There are good recording and monitoring systems in place. The manager has met the good practice recommendation from the last inspection by providing more localised information in the locality risk assessment. She has also been proactive in tackling unsafe staff practice. The level of analysis and the evaluation of the care delivered and its impact on young people is excellent. The independent visitor also provides good external scrutiny.

There has been a period of instability due to the fact that a number of significant staff have left the home. Some of these staff left their jobs following an assessment of staff practice. The manager no longer has a senior staff team, although a long-standing core staff team remains. New staff have been recruited. Young people suffered loss because of staff members leaving. Remaining staff and young people have faced instability because agency staff were employed to fill gaps in rotas. One young person said, 'It's hard to trust people you don't know.' As a result, there is a requirement relating to staff employment.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2016	Full	Good
30/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/01/2016	Full	Good
16/01/2015	Interim	Improved 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 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 must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, specifically in respect of ensuring that the home has enough suitably trained staff on duty and that every effort should be made to achieve continuity of staffing, the registered person is required to –</p> <p>(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and</p> <p>(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child.</p>	31/01/2017

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 that 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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