

2625942

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to four children.

Four children were living at the home at the time of inspection.

The manager in day-to-day charge of the home has an application in progress to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 April 2023

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: 17 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2022	Full	Good
16/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from positive and trusting relationships with staff, who have a good understanding of the children's individual needs. Children say that they feel safe, and that staff listen to them and respect their opinions. Children confidently approach staff about their worries and concerns.

All children are engaged in education and are making progress from their starting points. Two children are on a reduced timetable because they struggle to stay in school full time. The manager and staff are working closely with the school and the local authority to ensure that the children have access to the resources and support that they need.

Children are successfully encouraged to participate in community-based activities and clubs, including swimming, boxing, scouts, and football. Staff also creatively provide learning opportunities. Books and board games are readily available to children. They are encouraged to join the local library and are given support to complete work set by school. Children's independence is promoted, for example, by staff involving them in planning and preparing meals.

Children's views are valued. There are regular children's meetings and children have the opportunity to put forward suggestions about the way that the home is run. Recent examples include holiday activity choices and improvements to the home and garden. This gives children a sense of ownership and pride in their surroundings.

There have been some specific challenges in the home since the last inspection. They have been sensitively addressed through children's meetings and individual key-work sessions. Children have been supported to express their feelings about significant changes to the staff team and about living together harmoniously as a group.

Children's health needs are supported by staff through careful planning and strong communication with external health professionals.

Children are supported to see those people who are important to them. When plans need to change, staff sensitively explain this to children. One social worker told the inspector that staff are in regular contact with a child's family and 'always promote positive family time'.

Reports written for children's statutory reviews provide a comprehensive overview of their progress and include their views and wishes.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been updated to reflect staff changes. However, the updated version was not submitted to Ofsted. This was addressed by managers during the inspection.

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

Managers and staff prioritise the safety and well-being of children. Staff recruitment procedures are robust. This reduces the potential for unsuitable adults to be employed at the home.

The systems for administering and recording medication promote safe practice. As a result of learning from previous medication errors, managers have reviewed medication processes and updated staff guidance. Staff have received additional medication training and had medication competency assessments. These changes have reduced the risk of further medication errors.

Children's bedroom doors have alarms fitted to alert staff when children need help during the night. Appropriate permissions are in place for their use. At times, these are not switched off during the day and so alarms are activated when children go in and out of their rooms. This gives the home an institutional feel. Managers took steps to address this shortfall during the inspection.

Information about how to make a complaint is included in the written children's guide to the home, and children told the inspector that they know how to complain. However, children are not always informed about the outcome of their complaints in a timely way. This has the potential to stop children from telling adults if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care.

Risk management plans are in place for children. These are understood by staff and implemented effectively to reduce known risks. The frequency of behavioural incidents is reducing for all children. During times of difficulty, staff ensure children's emotional well-being. Following incidents, staff help children to reflect on how to better manage their emotions.

Regular health and safety checks of the building ensure that the environment remains safe and secure. Staff know the locality well and provide children with the freedom to explore the community at a level that is appropriate for their age, understanding and ability. This approach builds children's confidence and helps to teach them how to keep themselves safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children and staff speak positively about the impact that the new manager has had on the home. Staff members told the inspector that they feel optimistic about the way that the home is developing under his leadership. One member of staff said that the manager is always available to give advice.

The manager speaks passionately about his plans for the home and says that his priority is to make sure that children feel fully part of them. The manager, area manager and responsible individual have a well-informed awareness of the strengths

and weaknesses of the home. There is a clear plan in place to address the shortfalls that they have identified.

This has been a particularly challenging period of time for the home. Senior leaders have provided effective support to children, the staff team and the manager. This has had a negative impact on some aspects of management oversight of the home. One example relates to staff supervision and appraisals, which are not being carried out at agreed intervals. As a result, there are missed opportunities to reflect on the development needs of the staff team.

A further shortfall in the monitoring systems relates to records of complaints made by children. Complaints are acted on, but records could be improved to enable the manager to identify patterns and trends that could be learned from to improve practice.

In other areas, the manager has good oversight of the quality of care being provided to children. The progress of children is well recorded, and risk assessments are updated and reviewed regularly. The use of physical restraint is monitored, and staff reflect on incidents. A debrief and evaluation takes place to consider how to prevent recurrence. Focused team meetings provide staff with opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding about how to meet children's needs.

The manager understands the importance of engaging with other professionals, and feedback is positive regarding communication and partnership working.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	30 June 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	30 June 2023

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2625942

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 3a, Mill Green Business Estate, Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath RH16 1XQ

Responsible individual: Dawn Ives

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mike Simmonds, Social Care Inspector

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