

2772598

Registered provider: My Life - My Choice Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment.

The home registered with Ofsted in April 2024.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 December 2024

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 7 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit took place on 21 October 2024 to monitor the restriction notice. However, the inspectors identified further concerns, and three compliance notices

were issued. It was agreed at the case review held on 9 December 2024 that the provider has made sufficient progress in meeting these notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/08/2024	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on from the home in a planned way. Staff supported the child to return to their family, which was in line with their best interests.

The home is spacious, bright and clean, and children have the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms with various books, toys and games. Staff know the children well, and positive relationships were observed.

Children's health needs are met. They have access to all universal health services. Staff understand children's health needs as they work closely with external professionals, including school nurses and dieticians. Children's health needs are detailed in their care plans, which give staff clear guidance to support children's health.

Children attend school on a full-time basis and make progress. When children have struggled to access education, staff have worked creatively to help them overcome these barriers. Feedback from education professionals is positive. One professional said, 'Staff communicate well, and they arrange discussions when issues arise.'

Children's time spent with family is well supported by staff who facilitate and supervise family time. This demonstrates the value placed on these important relationships. One parent spoke about the improvement in their relationship with their child and said staff communication was good.

Staff encourage children to take part in activities such as art and crafts, bowling, baking and going on trips to the local park. These activities give children positive memories and rewarding life experiences.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff have received additional safeguarding training since the last inspection. They are clear on their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding matters. There have been no reportable safeguarding incidents since the last visit.

Children's behaviour support plans are not consistently updated following incidents. This does not ensure that staff have relevant information and up-to-date strategies to follow.

There have been improvements in the recording of incidents. However, staff do not consistently record events preceding behaviours, or document what actions they

have taken to resolve incidents. The manager has already identified this shortfall and is in the process of changing systems to improve the quality of recording in the home.

Since the last inspection, there has been a reduction in restraints. However, children are not routinely given the opportunity to reflect on the intervention, and records are not consistently thorough. Staff have received training to improve their recording, but the impact of this is not yet evident.

There are high staffing ratios in the home, which means that there have been no instances of the child going missing. Children have individualised missing-from-home protocols, which are regularly reviewed. Staff understand what action they need to take when children go missing.

Medication systems are effective, and there is safe storage of all medications, including controlled drugs. Experienced staff manage the administration of medication and have completed relevant training. This includes training in relation to rescue medications. This ensures they have the skills to support children with specific health needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified. Staff say that she is supportive and always available. The manager is motivated to meet the needs of the children and ensures that staff receive training in line with children's needs.

There have been some improvements in the manager's oversight and monitoring. However, gaps in records remain. The manager recognises the challenges of her role and the home's shortfalls, and she is looking at new ways to improve her oversight across the home.

The manager understands the importance of familiar faces for the child, and there is a core staff team. The manager has introduced a new electronic recording system for the hours staff work, which makes this much clearer. There are daily handovers to ensure that communication between staff is effective.

Children's records are child-centred. However, they are not always documented to a good standard, and it is not consistently clear when records have been written or who the author is. This does not help children to understand their time in the home.

The manager has recently completed her review of care, which does not give sufficient evaluation and there is no feedback from children. This does not support her to develop the service and improve practice in the home.

The manager works with a range of professionals and requests children's up-to-date education, health and care plans from their local authorities. However, these are not always received. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Team meetings are regular and well attended. At the most recent team meeting, the manager completed a lessons learned exercise for staff in managing incidents, but following this, the learning has not been consistently applied. This is a missed opportunity to develop staff's practice and learning.

Staff receive regular supervision. However, this lacks reflection and does not provide staff with the opportunity to consider their knowledge and skills and any areas for development. A recommendation was made to address this.

Not all the requirements from the last inspection have been met, and these have been restated.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) The provider must ensure that there are effective monitoring and review systems in place to identify and address weaknesses	16 January 2025

in staff practice, including recording in children's case records, reporting incidents and restraints. This requirement was not met and is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time, and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that accurate records are made of all incidents of restraint in the home.	16 January 2025

Furthermore, records must be evaluated and demonstrate that all staff involved have been spoken to about the measure used and that they are appropriately trained. The child involved must also be spoken to after the incident. This requirement was not met and is restated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) The registered person must ensure that children's case records contain up-to-date plans from the local authority relating to each child, and that staff have access to these plans. The registered person must ensure that children's case records contain up-to-date information about the child and the support offered by staff. This requirement was not met and is restated.	16 January 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that she continues to escalate the lack of an up-to-date education, health and care plan for the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.2)

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: 2772598

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: My Life - My Choice Limited

Registered provider address: 22a Albert Street, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington BB5 3NB

Responsible individual: Andrea Brighthouse

Registered manager: Kerry Hursey

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector
Sarah Probert, Social Care Inspector

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