

SC008485

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties. Four children were being cared for in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager post has been vacant since September 2021. A new manager has been appointed. He has not yet applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 1 November 2022

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit took place to monitor the action taken by leaders and managers in response to compliance notices served on 26 September 2022. Notices were served in relation to regulation 12, the protection of children and regulation 13, leadership and management.

The home has met the regulation 12 and regulation 13 notices, as suitable progress has been made against the specified steps.

All staff have now completed training in relation to physical intervention and safeguarding. Two staff have confirmed dates this month to complete their face-to-face first aid training. As a result, staff are being provided with the required training to inform their care of the children living in the home.

Some progress has been made towards improving the quality of risk assessments and risk reduction plans. Most assessments have now been reviewed and contain current information. Plans do not always reflect the risks presented by, or to, children. Not all plans have explanations that support the level of assessed risk. Plans contain generic phrases and are not always individualised to each child. Some language is unclear.

Staff understand risks to children and work in a way which aims to reduce these risks and protect children from harm. Staff practice is not yet being supported by consistently good-quality written assessments and plans. A requirement was made in relation to written assessments and plans at the last inspection. This requirement is restated.

Since the last inspection, there have been two incidents of physical intervention with children. The responsible individual, in the absence of a registered manager, has had oversight of these incidents. His evaluation of practice and his post-incident discussions with staff and children have taken place within timescales and are clearly recorded. As a result of his oversight, one member of staff has received further training in relation to the practice and recording of physical interventions. This more robust input from leaders and managers contributes to ensuring that children are living in an environment where they feel safe and can build positive relationships with staff.

Required improvements have been made to the physical environment of the home. Children's bedrooms and bathrooms are clean. Bedrooms are furnished to a reasonable standard. Staff are required to undertake daily checks of children's bedrooms and there is a cleaning rota in place for staff. As a result, children now have a home environment which makes them feel valued.

There is a framework in place which supports leaders and managers to monitor and review the quality of care provided. This includes weekly and monthly auditing of activity in the home by the manager. Regular meetings take place between the responsible individual and all the provider's registered managers to share practice. These meetings have not always worked effectively to identify and address poor practice and drive improvement. Some amendments have been made to what information is gathered by managers to inform these quality assurance meetings. These changes are in their infancy and, as such, the impact of these changes cannot yet be evaluated.

The remaining requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection were not considered at this monitoring visit and are repeated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2022	Full	Inadequate
08/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/07/2021	Full	Inadequate
11/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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
A responsible individual must have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7))(b))	20 December 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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)(b)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2022
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person	20 December 2022

intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. 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)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—	30 November 2022

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)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (b)(d)) Specifically, that the registered person should ensure that arrangements are in place with each placing local authority to receive information provided by return home interviews to assess risks and put arrangements in place to protect each child.	30 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.	20 December 2022

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that the independent person conducts unannounced on-site visits to the home and provides effective challenge.	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any restriction, other than one imposed by a court or in accordance with regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), on— a child's contact with parents, relatives or friends. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(c)(i))	30 November 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 2 (1) (2)(a)(i))	30 November 2022

Specifically, that the registered person ensures that children's risk assessments and risk reduction plans are up to date, contain evidence that explains the assessed level of risk, and provide staff with the information they need to undertake their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC008485

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Limited

Registered provider address: 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich CW5 7ED

Responsible individual: Simon Haddrell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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