

# SC008485

Registered provider: Choices Home For Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

The current manager was appointed in January 2019 and is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 7 February 2019

**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:** 13 November 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

### Enforcement action since last inspection:

Since the last inspection, the home has been subject to three compliance notices and a restriction of accommodation notice. The compliance and restriction of accommodation notices were monitored on 18 December 2018 and 21 January 2019.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 13/11/2018      | Full            | Inadequate              |
| 05/09/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 28/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 02/08/2016      | Full            | Outstanding             |

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Due date   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (Regulation 8 (1))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 30/04/2019 |
| The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who-<br>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and<br>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and support them to fulfil their potential.<br>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-<br>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;<br>ensure that staff-<br>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose.<br>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)) | 30/04/2019 |
| The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the home-<br>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))<br>This is with reference to the home following the fire safety risk management measures in the home's fire safety risk assessment and policies.                                                                                                                                                                              | 28/02/2019 |
| In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-<br>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 in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(f))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 31/03/2019 |
| The registered person must ensure that staff-<br>strive to gain each child's respect and trust;<br>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(viii)(ix))                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 30/04/2019 |
| In order to complete a quality of care review the registered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 30/04/2019 |

person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring 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. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c))

## Recommendations

- The independent return interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. ('Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care', January 2014, page 14, paragraph 32)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff encourage young people's attendance at education and provide support and advice about future training. However, young people's progress and their participation in education are not consistent, and this has a detrimental impact on their life chances.

Since the last inspection, some young people have begun to spend more time with staff and engage in direct work. In addition, staff appropriately reinforce their expectations of young people's behaviour and adherence to the boundaries. As a result, young people's responses are more socially acceptable.

Although some young people are more receptive to the care that is offered, others choose not to seek the support from staff when upset or distressed. Rather, they seek the company of peers who are not considered to be 'suitable'.

Staff offer a range of activities for young people to engage in. However, young people decline more often than they accept those invitations. As a result, the range of positive experiences that are shared is limited, and strong relationships between young people and staff are yet to be established.

A range of services are made available to young people, such as drug and alcohol services, sexual health workers and therapeutic support. However, young people do not make regular or consistent use of this support or value this input into their lives.

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

Since the last inspection, incidents of missing from home have declined for some young people, although for others these have increased.

Staff are fully aware of young people's vulnerabilities and the risks posed to their welfare when they are missing. When incidents of missing from home occur, staff are active in searching for and locating them. However, on one occasion it was not clear why there was a delay in staff returning a young person to the home.

Actions and guidance for staff to reduce the risks to young people are spread over several documents, and those documents are not fully congruent. This can be confusing for staff and limits managerial oversight.

Since the last inspection, processes have been established to ensure that young people are spoken to by an independent person following an incident of missing from home. However, these visits are not yet carried out within the required timescales.

Young people's behaviour in the home has improved since the last inspection, and staff have not sought police assistance to manage incidents. In addition, young people have not been involved in any known criminal activities outside the home.

A fire risk assessment of the home has been carried out since the last inspection. This has highlighted remedial actions that require attention. These are ongoing and are within required timescales. However, updated fire risk prevention policies are yet to be implemented by the manager and staff.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There have been a number of managerial changes over the last 12 months. The current manager was appointed in January 2019 and is in the process of applying to be registered.

Managers are addressing the concerns highlighted at the previous inspection. These improvements include staff spending focused time with young people, improved staff recording and greater consistency in care.

Managers have also introduced a system to monitor the impact that care is having on young people's outcomes. The monitoring, however, is limited in its scope, and the areas measured are not cross-referenced with each other. As a result, opportunities to develop greater understanding of young people's experiences are missed.

There is a training programme in place to enhance staff skills and their understanding and knowledge base of young people with complex and challenging behaviours. This training is further supported by ongoing involvement from the home's psychologist. The improvements made in staff practice are yet to be embedded and their understanding of the model of care deepened.

Young people are offered care from a consistent team of staff. Staff are well supported by the manager and deputy who provide daily informal support and more formal supervision.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** SC008485

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Choices Home For Children Limited

**Registered provider address:** c/o Afford Bond, 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich,  
Cheshire CW5 7ED

**Responsible individual:** Linda Heywood

**Registered manager:** post vacant

## Inspector

Pauline Yates, social care inspector

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