

SC008485

Choices Home For Children Limited

Monitoring visit

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 six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

The manager was registered to manage the home in July 2019.

Inspection date: 6 November 2019

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit took place following a rise in the number of notifications of serious incidents from the home. These related to the well-being and safety of young people, the number of young people being discharged and the safe administration of medication by staff. In addition, there have been recent resignations by key members of staff.

The requirements raised at the last full inspection in July 2019 were not reviewed at this inspection and therefore remain in place.

At this visit it was found that since the last inspection on 9 July 2019, five young people have been discharged, four of whom had experienced unplanned placement endings. One young person's discharge related to the increase in the number of young people living at the home. The manager had identified that the young person had begun to exhibit signs of being significantly unsettled, such as increased drugs misuse and disengagement from staff. However, plans to manage these concerns had not been implemented, nor tested for their efficiency, prior to another young person being admitted.

Managerial decision-making regarding the suitability of young people living together has been weak. This resulted in some young people's safety being compromised due to the risks that other young people posed. For example, one young person who was

admitted to the home was known to target, groom and exploit other young people and had known risks for gang and drugs-related behaviours. Another young person already living at the home was at risk of child sexual exploitation and inappropriate use of online social media sites. The two young people were repeatedly found in the same bedroom and measures put in place to prevent this were not effective.

Specific guidance and instructions given to waking-night staff to promote young people's safety have not been recorded, nor has this advice been more widely disseminated among the staff. Measures taken by the manager to improve the safety of young people have not been reviewed.

The manager had not been involved nor consulted when two young people were admitted to the home. As a result, the manager was not able to explain the rationale relating to these admissions and documents relating to the decision-making were not available to the inspectors.

Planning for admission into the home for several young people has omitted to obtain information from schools or previous placements. This has resulted in the needs of one young person not being fully understood before living at the home and police being called on several occasions to manage her behaviour.

Two young people had been admitted to the home within 24 hours of each other. Neither the manager nor acting responsible individual were able to explain this decision.

There has been an occasion where the manager gave notice to end a young person's placement due to concerns that the staff could not meet their needs. This was later rescinded without consultation with the manager. Consequently, her influence in delivering good-quality and safe care to young people has been significantly undermined.

The manager has not received supervision for five months. This is a significant shortfall given the concerns regarding young people's behaviours, inability of the home to meet some young people's needs and the number of discharges.

A young person who has significant healthcare needs has experienced medication errors by staff. Not all staff were trained in the management of his conditions prior to his admission. The management team has since been proactive in ensuring that all staff are now trained and that they are confident in administering his medication.

Senior managers are aware of the concerns regarding poor care planning resulting in the high number of unplanned discharges. A new system is in the process of being implemented but is not yet fully embedded. For example, one young person currently refuses to attend education. The circumstances relating to this refusal were known by several sources prior to her admission to the home, however the manager did not contact the education provider, the previous placement nor parents to gather

more information prior to her admission.

Since the last full inspection, there have been a number of key staff changes and a number of resignations. These include the responsible individual, the registered manager, the deputy manager and team leader. The registered manager is currently serving her notice period at the home and there is a transition plan for a new manager to be appointed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2019	Full	Good
06/02/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/11/2018	Full	Inadequate
05/09/2017	Full	Good

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 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the home— 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)) In particular, that the home implements all the fire safety risk management recommendations as contained in the home's fire safety risk assessment.	31/07/2019
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	31/07/2019
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (a)(b)) In particular, that the registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children.	31/12/2019
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31/12/2019
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	31/12/2019

in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (1) (a)(b)(2)(a)(b))	
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Recommendations

- 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 homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
In particular, that documents used to advise on the management of risk take into account all known information and that such documents are congruous and not contradictory.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
In particular that repairs and redecoration are completed in children's rooms in a prompt and timely manner.

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, Cheshire CW5 7ED

Responsible individual: Susan Mackay

Registered manager: Katy Routledge

Inspectors

Pauline Yates, social care inspector

Louise Redfern, social care compliance inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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