

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. It is registered to provide care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

A notice of restriction of accommodation was served by Ofsted on 9 May 2024 until the 31 July 2024. No children can move into the home during this period without the notice being lifted.

At the time of the monitoring visit, four children were living in the home.

The registered manager's post is vacant.

Inspection date: 17 June 2024

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 7 and 8 May 2024. Ofsted took action to restrict the accommodation at the children's home, under section 22b of the Care Standards Act 2000. Three compliance notices were also issued, under section 22A of the Care Standards Act 2000. These related to regulation 12, the protection of children standard and regulation 13, leadership and management standard and regulation 24 monitoring and surveillance.

This monitoring visit took place to monitor compliance with the notices.

Since the last inspection the manager has resigned, and the responsible individual is now overseeing the management of the home.

Children say they are happy and like living in the home. One child said, 'Things have improved, it's got better here'.

Action has been taken to support staff to understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. Team meetings, single subject supervision sessions and additional training have been used effectively to enable staff to reflect on children's progress and consider their individual and group needs.

Risk management in the home is not robust. Children's risk management plans are not individualised and do not always include clear strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe. Daily room searches are taking place for one child. However, there is no guidance for staff to follow. This does not ensure that practice is consistent.

Despite efforts to improve the supervision of children, staff were unaware that a child had left the home until another child alerted them. The child's risk plan was not followed due to a shortage of staff and when the child wished to return, the staff failed to respond in a child centred way. Leaders and managers had not identified this shortfall in staff practice and do not yet have effective oversight of records. There is a lack of management evaluation throughout incident reports. This reduces opportunities to identify learning and to develop practice in the home.

Leaders have now reviewed the practices of recording phone calls into and from the home and have made the decision to disable recordings. This now ensures that the privacy of children, employees, and other stakeholders is not compromised.

Door alarms remain in use on three of the children's bedroom doors. Records do not reflect the use of door alarms being kept under review to ensure that they are only used when required to keep children safe.

Following the monitoring visit, it was agreed at a case review that the provider has taken sufficient action to meet the steps in the compliance notices for regulation 12 the protection of children standard, regulation 13 leadership and management and regulation 24 monitoring and surveillance.

Additional requirements have been raised under regulation 12, to reduce any ambiguity in risk management plans and the use of door alarms; and regulation 13, to ensure that leaders and managers have effective oversight and that the home is sufficiently staffed at all times to meet children's needs.

The requirements made at the last inspection are outside of the scope of this visit. These will be reviewed at the next inspection.

The notice of restriction of accommodation remains in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/08/2023	Full	Inadequate
30/05/2023	Full	Inadequate

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(b)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that children's risk plans are individual to children and contain clear steps for staff to follow and keep children safe. The registered provider must ensure that the rationale for room searches and the use of alarms on children's bedroom doors are clear, used only for safeguarding purposes and do not restrict the movement of children. The registered provider must ensure that these measures are kept under review with clear evidence of decision making.	12 July 2024

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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and 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)(d)(f)(g)(i)(h)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that the management oversight of the day-to day running of the home ensures that children are protected from harm. And that there are robust monitoring systems in place to enable effective oversight of staff practice in the home. The registered provider must ensure there are at all times the correct staffing ratios in the home to allow staff to follow children's missing from home plans and respond effectively to children's needs.	12 July 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped	28 June 2024

to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(x)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that direct work that is carried out with children includes topics that are specific to children’s individual needs. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended	28 June 2024

that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that the manager receives meaningful and reflective practice-related supervision.	28 June 2024
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that an up-to-date rota containing the hours worked in the home by both the staff and manager is maintained. The registered person must also ensure there is an accessible records of the following matters listed in Schedule 4— a record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child— the date of the child's admission to the home; the date on which the child ceased to be accommodated in the home; the child's address immediately before being accommodated in the home; the child's address on leaving the home;	28 June 2024

the child's placing authority; and the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is accommodated.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (e))	28 June 2024
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. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	28 June 2024

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: Linda Heywood

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Gilbert, Social Care Inspector

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