

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC008485
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Choices Home For Children Limited
Registered provider address	Choices Home for Children Limited, 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7ED

Responsible individual	Susan Mackay
Registered manager	Gary Holt
Inspector	Rebecca Quested

Inspection date	28/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people living in this home continue to make exceptional progress in all areas of their development. Since the last inspection, two young people have successfully transitioned to new placements, one to live with their family and another to live independently. Both young people had lived in the home for several years and were well-prepared for their moves. Staff continue to provide a secure base for these young people and to offer them support and encouragement in their new ventures. One of these young people proudly told me, 'Staff have been very supportive about my move to a flat. I come and visit them. I have an audition for a degree in urban dance at a London university next week.' Staff are highly skilled at developing positive relationships with young people. They take time to get to know young people who are new to the home, who quickly settle in. Young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce or stop. This represents significant progress from their starting points. One young person said, 'My staff have really helped me, they are always there if I need them, they always make me smile. I can talk to them about stuff. I haven't self-harmed since I lived here as I feel so supported.' The registered manager ensures that staff are able to meet young people's specific needs through sourcing suitable training and accessing local specialist services. All young people continue to maintain outstanding progress. They attend and make good progress with their education. Staff support their formal and informal learning, as one tutor said, 'Staff are so supportive and have ensured that he has engaged with education. He is making good progress and taking his exams.' Staff also encourage young people to consider their future plans. Staff take young people to college open days and organise reviews where their education provision is no longer providing them with sufficient challenge and opportunity. Staff promote young people's involvement in volunteering, part-time paid work and also work placements. This promotes essential life skills as well as improving young people's self-confidence. Staff ensure that young people benefit from universal and specialist health services. The registered manager acts as a responsible and concerned parent	

would when young people's behaviour does not correlate with their diagnosis. He arranges for young people to be reassessed and their medication reviewed, with exceptional results. The young person said, 'My life has changed dramatically. I feel much better now all the medication has stopped. I am not aggressive and don't need to be restrained. The best thing about living here is my brilliant key worker. I have a bond with him.'

Staff always promote young people's contact with their families and friends when that is safe and in their best interests, including those young people who are placed a long way from home. This ensures that young people develop and maintain their sense of identity.

Young people are becoming increasingly safe. Staff's detailed understanding of young people means that they are responsive to subtle changes in young people's behaviour and presentation. Young people are rarely missing, even those who have historically been missing on a daily basis. Staff understand what to do when young people are missing and work with the police, British transport police and families to ensure that young people are at risk of harm for the minimum amount of time. Young people feel a strong sense of investment in the home and in their relationships with staff. This is evident in their requests to their social workers to 'stay put' when they try and move them on to semi-independent living before they are ready.

Young people's risk-taking reduces as staff help them to develop more effective ways to manage their emotions and behaviour. Staff are skilled in the use of de-escalation techniques and patterns of restraint show that this is reducing over time. Staff do not always record when they discuss incidents of restraint with young people. However, it is evident through young people's notes to staff that they are reflecting on their behaviour. One young person said, 'I am extremely sorry and I want to try and build our relationship up.' Another said, 'My behaviour wasn't acceptable. I appreciate all you have done. I like everyone and you're all trying to help me change and you have all looked after me.' The registered manager has made some progress in recording his debrief with staff who have been involved in restraining young people but he does not have a process established so that an independent person reviews those restraints in which he is involved. This prevents the opportunity for independent scrutiny of these incidents.

The registered manager recognises that his attention has been taken away from the home as he opens another provision. This means that there has not been progress in addressing shortfalls, such as ensuring up-to-date care plans and review minutes are in place for each child. The impact of this is minimised by a consistent staff team that has regular contact with young people's placing authorities. The registered manager has not checked in his internal monitoring that all visitors to the home are consistently completing the visitor's book or that the independent visitor is sending their reports to Ofsted. He took steps to address these issues during the inspection.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or physical disabilities. The home forms part of an independent social care company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
04/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/06/2015	Full	Good
22/12/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
The registered person must maintain records for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to a child, are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1))	31/03/2017
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered provider must ensure that: (2)(b) 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. In particular, that all visitors to the home complete the visitor's book.	31/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so, has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. The registered person must ensure that within five 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. In particular, that the registered manager has a system in place for an authorised person to review restraints which the registered manager is involved in. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(c))	31/03/2017
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	31/03/2017

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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