

# SC014650

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

Staff at this home look after up to four children whose needs include difficult behaviours and learning difficulties, and who are often at risk of self-harm, substance misuse and sexual exploitation. There has been a registered manager in post since 14 May 2019.

**Inspection date:** 6 February 2020

**Date of last inspection:** 14 May 2019

**Judgement at last inspection:** good

**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 good at the last full inspection.  
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Impact assessments are produced to decide if a new child will fit in with the group. These assessments now include the potential risks to the child who is being assessed, and to those children who already live at the home. The registered manager can describe how he reached his assessment, but this detail is not included in the written impact assessment. This is a missed opportunity to fully demonstrate how managers decide whether a child should move into the home. This omission means that any reviews undertaken do not show the balance of how the positive issues are weighed against the risks.

For some time following a new admission, the existing children remained settled and were progressing at school.. More recently this has changed. Nevertheless, leaders and managers' actions have led to a swift decrease in the numbers of incidents occurring.

Children's engagement with their education is variable. One child is fully engaged in their education plan and is achieving well. Other children's attendance at their educational placements has been less frequent since the new year. The registered manager has a good understanding of the reasons for this, and has suitable plans about how to re-engage children with education. However, staff do not always successfully put these plans into action, which reduces the potential for children's learning.

Several concerning safeguarding incidents have occurred involving children living at this home and children living at other homes the organisation owns. The registered manager is working well with managers from other homes to stop such incidents from occurring. When appropriate, the relevant safeguarding referrals have been made, and meetings with pertinent professionals have occurred. The children's safety is therefore being promoted during a difficult period.

Leaders and managers' monitoring of the quality of services and staff performance has improved. As a result of the registered manager's monitoring, risk assessments are quickly updated after incidents occur. Staff supervisions are occurring more frequently, and staff report that the registered manager was supporting them well to meet children's needs.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 14/05/2019      | Full            | Good                            |
| 17/01/2019      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 10/05/2018      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 09/01/2018      | Full            | Good                            |

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

## Recommendations

- The registered person must challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. For non-looked-after children, the home should ensure they have sufficient information from the child's 'placing authority' (usually their parents/carers) and other relevant agencies to effectively assess whether they can meet the child's needs before agreeing to the placement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 56-57, paragraph 11.5)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that the assessment includes any positive aspects they consider the child might bring.

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

## Information about this inspection

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.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** SC014650

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

**Registered provider:** My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Unit 3a, Mill Green Business Estate, Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath RH16 1XQ

**Responsible individual:** Dawn Ives

**Registered manager:** Tom Chilton

## Inspector

Ruth Coler, Social Care Inspector

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