

SC014650

My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is one of a number of homes that the provider operates.

Inspection date: 7 November 2017

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was to follow up on seven requirements made following a full inspection on 20 and 21 September 2017 when the home was judged as inadequate.

The registered persons have taken steps to address all of the concerns identified. Five of the requirements which were set have been met fully. Two requirements are repeated because insufficient action has been taken to rectify the shortfalls. An additional requirement is made in relation to young people's care. No change of inspection judgement is made at this time.

At the inspection in September 2017, the following seven requirements were made.

A requirement was made to ensure that children are properly cared for, are welcomed appropriately, and that the local authority children's care plans are followed. This requirement is not met.

Managers did not fully explore the exact details of a serious offence a young person committed prior to admitting him to the home. The staff were, therefore, unable to prepare and implement a risk assessment that takes full account of all of the known issues.

The provider has developed a number of plans to improve how young people are admitted. However, these plans were not used as the young person was placed in an emergency. This weakens the impact of the proposed changes and reduces the possibility that the provider can fully assess that they can meet the young person's needs. This is especially necessary to build staff's confidence after a time of

turbulence when they have found it difficult to manage young people's behaviours. However, the staff have received, and continue to receive, external support to manage the young person's needs from the provider's therapeutic partner. The therapeutic service was asked prior to admission about whether the young person was an appropriate match.

A requirement was made to ensure that the staff are able to de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. This requirement is met.

Staff have improved their abilities to reduce the likelihood of, and manage, confrontations between young people.

The provider arranged significant ongoing additional training and support for the staff. Staff say that this has made a real difference. Staff acknowledge that they need to embed this learning further, especially in relation to one young person. Staff were confident that, if consistent care was provided, they could make a real difference. Staff confirmed that they were looking at how the team can work together to make this change.

Plans are in place with regard to this young person's care. However, while the staff are confident about being able to make improvements in the future, the young person's care and support have not made any significant progress to date. Staff have not been able ensure that the young person consistently follows the routines they have planned. She has not attended school since the last inspection, nor have her basic care needs been met. Social workers confirm that they see no improvement in the care provided and remain concerned about the quality of support and care that the young person receives.

Two requirements were made in relation safeguarding practice. One requirement is to ensure that appropriate referrals are made in a timely way. Another requirement is to ensure and evidence how plans to improve how well all the staff identify, record and escalate safeguarding concerns, including any relating to whistle-blowing, improve practice. These requirements are met.

The provider has successfully developed training, monitoring and reviewing systems to support the staff when making appropriate and timely safeguarding referrals. The staff were clear about the procedures for following-up safeguarding concerns and whistle-blowing procedures. One member of staff said, 'Safeguarding is now at the forefront of everyone's minds.' Referrals are dealt with appropriately and quickly and referred to appropriate safeguarding teams. Relevant changes were made to care plans, risk assessments and staff deployment as a result of one safeguarding concern.

Regular reviews of the staff's competency to identify and make appropriate referrals occur in various processes, such as supervision. Staff now have a system of prompts to keep safeguarding as part of their daily considerations. When issues relating to concerns about staff practice have been identified, plans are made to investigate the

concern and make decisions about suitable actions.

A requirement was made to ensure that the staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. In particular, the provider must ensure that these systems adequately cover all areas of practice and identify and use any trends to improve within appropriate timescales. This requirement is met.

The provider has enhanced its systems for auditing the impact of staff training on practice. The short period of time since the training was carried out has not allowed for managers to consider how these improvements have impacted on training programmes or on practice. However, the staff were implementing the strategies outlined in the improvement plan and this is supporting staff to better reflect on the links between training and their everyday work practices.

A requirement was made for the organisation to ensure that the responsible individual ensures that any investigations into practice are thorough and address all concerns within the investigation. This requirement is met.

Appropriate training is having a positive impact on how the provider conducts disciplinary investigations. However, how the provider intends to monitor the quality of any disciplinary investigations in the future is less clear. The training took place recently and, while there are plans to discuss the implications for practice of the training, these have yet to occur.

A requirement was made that the provider must ensure that the relationships with professionals work effectively and support the young person's progress and needs being met. This requirement is not met.

Relationships with one social work team have not improved and the current relationship does not promote the safety and well-being of that child. Managers agreed to discuss any potential admissions with social workers who have young people already placed at the home, prior to a young person being admitted. This did not occur.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2017	Full	Inadequate
11/01/2017	Full	Good
25/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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
(1) The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (b) that arrangements are in place to— (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b),(2)(b)(i)(c)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that the details of any issues of concern identified are fully explored during the time they assess whether the staff can meet a young person's needs.	08/01/18
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans (d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(a)(d))	08/01/18
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— (a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	08/01/18

registered person to—

(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(2)(iv))

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: 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: Peter Kazmarski

Registered manager: Toni-Elizabeth Corke

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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