

SC014650

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to four children. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager of the home has been registered with Ofsted since November 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2022	Full	Good
16/03/2022	Full	Good
06/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by adults who understand their individual needs and vulnerabilities. Adults are knowledgeable about children's backgrounds, including their ethnicity and culture.

Children are encouraged to experience a range of positive experiences to develop their skills, promote their interests and build their self-confidence. For example, one child who recently joined the home has been to try a local gymnastics club and is being supported to visit local towns to familiarise herself with the area. Children are given gym memberships if they wish to join, and they are supported to attend after-school activities, such as drama clubs and boxing.

Children are encouraged to be involved in day-to-day decisions, such as about holiday activities, meal planning and the decor in the home. The three children living at the home have recently arrived, and a children's meeting has not yet been arranged. This would provide the opportunity for them to talk as a group about their early days in the home and encourage them to live together harmoniously as a group. The recording of children's meetings would be enhanced by including more detail and a clear time frame for action and review.

Children's progress is recorded in key-work sessions. These recordings would be improved by consistently including clear actions and specific review dates.

Adults work alongside health colleagues to ensure children's health needs are managed effectively, and children in school are supported to attend regularly. For children awaiting school provision, the manager and senior managers are proactive in chasing the local authority for clear plans and start dates.

The adults work closely with the people who are important to children and support them to have family time in line with their individual plans. When children leave the home, they are routinely offered a period of outreach support and are presented with a memory book detailing their time living there.

Reports written for children's annual reviews provide a comprehensive overview of their progress. These would be enhanced by consistently including children's own written views and wishes.

The home is currently undergoing refurbishment throughout. There is a clear maintenance plan in place for both the house and garden. Children are being consulted with about personalising the living areas further to give them a feeling of ownership of the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children told the inspector they feel safe living at the home. They know how to raise concerns or complaints. Adults supporting them encourage and reward behaviour using positive regard and praise. This means consequences are rarely used. Following incidents, adults help children to reflect on how to better manage their emotions.

The management team liaises appropriately with other agencies to agree how best to manage difficult and complex situations and keep children safe. Over recent weeks, the home has been through a particularly challenging period. The responsible local authority is working closely with the home manager and partner agencies to agree suitable responses and plans. A team manager informed the inspector that the manager and his team are 'working really well with us and being very patient and understanding'.

Staff understand the organisational safeguarding policies and their responsibility to follow these. They know how to raise concerns and who to contact for immediate advice or support. This means safeguarding incidents are quickly brought to the attention of managers and the right procedures are followed.

Children's online activities are monitored to ensure that children stay safe online.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust, and allegation management has been reviewed with increased oversight from senior managers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified. He is seen as supportive and knowledgeable by his team. He is well supported by two deputies. The area manager regularly visits the home to offer support and oversight.

The adults say the training available to them is relevant and of a good standard. This means they feel well equipped to support children. Adults say the organisation offers opportunities for them to progress in their careers should they so wish.

Staff say they can talk to managers about any concerns they have. Team meetings take place regularly. However, supervision and appraisals are still not being carried out at agreed intervals. As a result, there are missed opportunities to reflect on and identify the support and development needs of the staff team. The manager and area manager are aware of this shortfall, and an action plan is in place to address the gaps.

There is effective partnership working with other professionals and family members. Feedback is positive. One team manager confirmed her experience of good joint working and said the manager was effective at 'pulling different professionals together' to focus on plans for children.

Staff recruitment and retention have been challenging for the home since the last inspection. Managers have worked hard to keep the impact of this on children to a minimum. When it is necessary to use agency staff, managers try to ensure that they are staff who are familiar to the children.

The senior management team has a well-informed awareness of the home's strengths and areas for development, and there is a clear action plan in place to address shortfalls.

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
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	1 July 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	1 July 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the principle of listening to children and taking their views and feelings into account when planning and undertaking their care is adhered to. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.5)

Information about this 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 Limited

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

Mike Simmonds, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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