

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC014650
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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	Suzy Lemmy

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC014650

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The registered manager is a strong and committed leader who ensures that the staff practise in ways that meet the needs of young people.
- There are nurturing, trusting relationships between the young people and members of staff. Consequently, young people make good progress during their time at this home.
- Careful consideration and assessments of young people moving into the home mean that they settle well.
- Young people feel listened to and are able to talk to staff and know they are valued. Staff act on any concerns or complaints.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They have helped young people to recognise and reduce their risk of child sexual exploitation.
- Therapeutic interventions help to reduce the emotional distress of young people. Young people progress well educationally, in work placements and socially.
- Shortfalls identified during this inspection have not compromised the safety or well-being of the young people.

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
45: Review of quality of care (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating: (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (5) The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.	31/03/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home, which provides care for four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/08/2015	Full	Good
13/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff provide stability, consistency and a good quality of care, which enables young people to learn to trust the adults who care for them. As a result, they form healthy attachments. Staff know the young people and help them to learn to interact with each other positively. They support, nurture and enjoy spending time with them. This increases young people's sense of self-worth. The registered manager matches new young people moving into the home with the young people who already live there. Prior to a young person moving in, the registered manager gathers information from parents, any previous placements and the local authority, which informs the young person's care plan and risk assessments. One young person has moved into the home since the last inspection. The registered manager ensured that staff had the information needed to care for her; consequently, staff feel confident in meeting her needs. Some young people have struggled with their relationships with each other. This resulted in an increase in recorded incidents. Staff work with young people to help them to learn how to tolerate each other's differences. This has led to a reduction in incidents and a more relaxed atmosphere in the home. Key-work sessions and young people's meetings continue to address these issues. Young people are encouraged to express their views and know that staff will listen to and act on any worries. The increased regularity of young people's meetings enables young people to express their opinions and influence the running of the home. Young people contribute to the agenda, chair the meetings and use them to discuss a range of topics. This helps them to prepare for when they need to make important decisions in the future. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff. They are all able to identify staff whom they are close to and can talk to about any concerns. One young person said, 'All the staff are happy, I get on with all of them, and they are fun'. The inspector witnessed one young person ringing the registered manager for a 'chat' while waiting for a lift after work. Young people engage well with staff, who respond positively towards them. Young people living in the home have complex difficulties, including emotional distress. Regular consultations with specialist therapeutic services ensure that staff are able to help young people to manage and reduce their anxieties. Staff try new approaches that are suggested and adapt or review them in discussion with the	

therapists as needed. Monthly multi-professional meetings ensure a continuity of care across all settings. Young people's emotional health is a high priority for staff.

As a result of the personalised care that they receive, young people make significant progress in education and the workplace. All young people attend school or work placements. One young person had not attended school for three years while in previous placements; she is now attending college full time. She has made friends with whom she travels into college. This is a major achievement for this young person, and which can be attributed to the support and encouragement of the staff. Another young person is completing an apprenticeship and is managing this well, despite having to travel a long distance and work a full day. Staff support her by taking her to and from work, when needed, to ensure that her work placement is successful. Another young person was not attending school when she moved into the home; she is now able to attend part time and has a programme of education and activities during the rest of her day. The therapy team and staff facilitated her reintegration into school. Staff attend with her to ensure that the school placement is successful.

Staff ensure that young people have the opportunity to enjoy a range of activities, including a Zumba club, and holidays of their choice. One young person proudly discussed with the inspector her recent holiday, in which she learned to kayak. Because of this experience, her self-confidence and sense of pride in herself has grown. Young people have made noticeable progress in social skills and their social presentation.

Staff encourage young people to develop independence and self-care skills. For example, young people plan, shop, prepare and make meals for themselves and staff. They learn valuable life skills. Young people are encouraged to travel independently, depending on their abilities. Staff help young people to gain these skills by using small steps to achieve this safely.

Some of the young people are due to make transitions to adult placements this year. Staff work closely with professionals to identify suitable placements. Thorough assessments are undertaken to ensure that any future placements have up-to-date information in relation to the young people's needs. Senior managers are committed to supporting a planned move, including a slow transition and extended outreach work for those who need this support. The registered manager is working closely with adult services to secure the funding to support this outreach programme for a young person who is moving on.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be worried or concerned about a young person's safety. A newly employed staff member demonstrated a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and her responsibilities regarding reporting any concerns, including whistleblowing. All members of staff are trained in recognising the signs of child sexual exploitation. They have been successful in reducing the risk to young people by developing trusting relationships, so that young people can talk to them if they feel that they are at risk. The registered manager works closely with professionals and carers involved in young people's care to identify risk factors. As a result of staff interventions, one young person who was previously considered at high risk of child sexual exploitation is now classed a low risk. A social worker said, 'This is a fantastic placement; the staff are able to safeguard my young person.' Staff follow the company's missing from home protocol. They are aware of the steps to follow in the event that a young person is missing or absent without permission. Staff implement these measures effectively. Staff are vigilant and respond quickly if a young person goes missing. They will follow young people and look for them until they are located. Staff work closely with young people's friends to ensure that young people benefit from positive relationships outside of the home. Staff meet the young person's friends prior to any stays. Senior managers ensure that all the necessary checks are completed, and that parents and professionals agree that the young person is safe, prior to allowing overnight stays with friends. Risk assessments completed by staff are comprehensive, thoroughly monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant; staff implement them effectively. For example, the fire alarm was set off following a fault; one young person became distressed and needed support to leave the building. As a result, the registered manager reviewed the young person's fire risk assessment and arranged a de-sensitising programme to ensure that this young person will be able to respond more calmly in the future. Young people know how to complain and that the registered manager responds to their complaints and takes them seriously. The registered manager talks through any complaints with young people and ensures that they are resolved. Senior managers are regularly available to the young people should they want to discuss any issues. This helps young people to feel that they are valued by staff. Consistency in approach to behaviour management has led to no restraints being required since the last inspection. There was one occasion when staff were not	

clear in their recording regarding one, which meant that evaluation and analysis of this incident was difficult. However, the majority of incidents are clearly recorded, with good analysis by the registered manager.

Sanctions are rarely used; staff favour praise and rewards instead. Staff took two young people to London recently to have their hair styled as a reward for showing mature behaviour. Young people respond well to this practice.

Staff have a good knowledge of e-safety and have regular training to keep them up to date regarding risks online. Staff members' relationships with young people have meant that young people talk to them if they feel unsafe. They are aware of the risks, both within the community and through social media, and act to protect themselves. Young people have learned to use social media safely. For example, one young person proudly showed the registered manager safety measures that she had initiated to ensure that only known people could contact her.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post since June 2016. She was previously the deputy manager at this home. The registered manager has enrolled on the Level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care and children's and young people's services. She is also undertaking a therapeutic practitioner's award. She values the expertise and experience that staff gain from formal training. Staff are either qualified at Level 3 diploma for residential childcare or are working towards it. Staff reported that access to training is good; one member of staff reported that he has 11 training days this month to support him in his recent promotion to deputy manager. All staff receive varied training, which gives them the skills and knowledge to provide structured and informed care for the young people. Senior management ensures that there is a clear evidence-based career path for staff who show the necessary aptitude and commitment to working towards senior levels within the home and organisation. All staff spoken to by the inspector were very positive about the organisation. As a result, they show commitment and enjoyment in their work with the young people. Staff speak positively of the registered manager and the support that they receive from her. One member of staff discussed how she has had the help and encouragement needed to ensure that she was able to pass her probation. She valued the open and honest approach of the registered manager, whom she felt confident to consult with when she needed additional support. Supervision is effective and evaluative. Staff are able to discuss individual young	

people's needs and reflect on their practice and the impact on the young people. Supervision is usually monthly; however, there was one month when no supervision was undertaken. This means that staff did not have the opportunity to meet with a manager formally at this time.

Team meetings and therapeutic consultations are used effectively to reflect on how well the team is working together to manage young people's emotional well-being.

The registered person works well with other agencies, for example the therapeutic team and placing authority. Professionals report that communication is good between them and all staff. Staff inform the placing authority of any incidents promptly and send weekly reports regarding the young people. Staff have built positive relationships with all those who are responsible for young people's care. One professional commented, 'We have asked for an assessment to see why the young person has done so well in this placement when she has struggled in every other placement she has had.' Another social worker said, 'The registered manager has played a huge part in the success story of my young person – I have nothing but praise for her and the staff.'

Staff carefully plan for reviews and meetings; they help young people to contribute to them. Staff encourage young people to complete questionnaires prior to these meetings. This helps the young people to voice their opinions in a meaningful way.

The home's statement of purpose is regularly reviewed. The registered manager clearly documents the service that the home provides to potential stakeholders, including the aims and objectives.

Monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the quality of care is scrutinised by external professionals. Senior managers audit the records in the home. This scrutiny is further underpinned by checks made by the independent person. The registered manager takes the views of the independent person seriously and acts on any recommendations made in order to improve practice within the home. The registered manager's report in relation to the home was reflective and honest; however, she was unable to demonstrate that she had consulted with parents, professionals and young people to inform this report. The registered manager is committed to improving the service for the young people. She has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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