

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC014650
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	My Choice Children's Homes Limited
Registered person address	Unit 3a, Mill Green Business Estate, Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1XQ

Responsible individual	Peter Kazmarski
Registered manager	Lorna Roberts
Inspector	Suzy Lemmy

Inspection date	20/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained progress
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:

- Leadership and management of the children's home are strong. Staff members are well qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the young people. They are motivated to make improvements in young people's lives; incentives like holidays abroad with staff are effective in fostering ambition to travel.
- Young people make good progress, motivated by a staff group who are proud of young people's achievements; the whole team celebrated a young person's GCSE examination results. The staff team focus on helping the young people to develop in all areas of their lives.
- Episodes of young people going missing have reduced due to staff working effectively with the multi-professional network. High risk concerns about young people at risk of child sexual exploitation has also reduced to medium risk.
- Staff members work closely with parents to promote positive contact with family and friends, within the home and in the community. One parent said the home has done 'remarkable work with my child, I can't fault them'.
- Shortfalls identified relates to delay in reporting an allegation made in relation to a staff member to Ofsted, and lack of individual risk assessment in respect of the use of door alarms.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if – (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4) (c))	30/10/2015

Recommendations

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

Any modifications to the environment of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's need, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.10)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that is registered to accommodate three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/05/2014	CH - Full	Good
25/02/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

23/07/2013	CH - Full	Good
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Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The staff team focus on young people's well-being and support them to make good progress. For example, staff celebrate the excellent grades achieved by a young person in her GCSE examinations. Young people aspire to attend college and university, encouraged by an organisation that funds additional tuition fees. Young people are rewarded for their effort and achievement, such as holidays abroad for completing examinations and a short stay in the area where a young person plans to attend university. Young people live in a stable and secure environment. One young person has experienced a number of placements prior to living in the home but has managed to sustain this placement. The young person says that this is because their 'mind set changed'. The key worker reports that a holiday abroad contributed to this change, the young person is now ambitious and aims to earn money to be able to travel. The young person's Social Worker says 'staff members have supported the young person to engage and this has helped her to work through the risks of placement breaking down; this is the longest placement the young person has managed'. Young people develop positive and constructive relationships with staff who understand their needs. One young person said 'I am happy here, I get on with all the staff'. Another young person said that the 'home is good and that they would recommend the home to other young people'. The home is well equipped and homely. Bedrooms are personalised and young people take pride in the home. One young person, observed during the inspection, was joining in with staff to repair the home's fishpond. Staff promotes good relationships with young people's family and friends. Parents speak favourably about the impact that the residential home has had on their child. Comments from parents include 'absolute life savers' and 'the Registered Manager has gone above and beyond'. One parent is clear that her relationship has improved with her child since the young person has been at the home 'which is a direct result of the work they have done'. Young people enjoy overnight stays with their families knowing that they can return to the children's home for support, if needed.	

Clearly written care plans include psychodynamic assessments, which inform staff about the best way to respond to the young person. This individual guidance provides staff with good knowledge of possible triggers for challenging behaviours. This understanding minimises the number of incidents by their use of de-escalation techniques. The young people contribute to their plans; this ensures that they are able to take an active role in decision-making.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are kept safe by a staff team who demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding practice. Young people report that they feel safe. Safety plans are clear and thorough. These include details about the people young person can associate with and those deemed to be a risk. Safety measures are agreed with young people and where possible parent's. This has led to clear expectations on all involved. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) training delivered by an external specialist agency is effective in helping staff to recognise signs and risks. This has supported staff in their work with a multi-professional team to develop clear strategies, which has been successful reduction of risks. In addition, the number of young people going missing from home has decreased. For example, one young person previously identified as at high risk of CSE has engaged with staff and the strategies in place and significantly reduced the frequency of missing episodes. Young people's emotional well-being is of prime importance. A psychologist commissioned by the organisation, works with staff to develop their understanding of young people's emotional needs: this work has been effective. Staff members demonstrate an increased understanding of how difficult emotions present through behaviour. A Social Worker reports that this psychologist input has 'helped staff see behind the behaviour'. Staff responds quickly to young people's distress and promotes a calm atmosphere. Regular meetings encourage young people to address any issues and ensure they feel listened to. For example, one young person felt that their peers were getting more attention; staff reassured the young person that this is not the case and use key work sessions to reinforce this. Risk assessments inform staff of potential risks. These are subject to regular reviews to ensure that they remain effective. The risk assessments developed by	

staff with young people enable them to take responsibility for their own risk management.

Bedroom doors are lockable with a key to secure young peoples' privacy and security. However, alarms fitted to bedroom doors to alert staff if young people leave, have not been individually risk assessed or reviewed.

Recruitment arrangements are robust. The vetting procedures ensure that only people who are safe to work with young people are appointed. The induction programme ensures that staff are confident and well informed about the young people prior to working directly with them. Staff members demonstrate good knowledge of the young people's needs.

Since the last inspection, there has been one safeguarding issue. This was investigated in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer and the young person's Social Worker. There was, however, a delay in notification to Ofsted of this event.

The staff team have good knowledge around e-safety. An application that prevents the use of risky internet sites, has been installed; this helps to keep young people safe. Young people sign up to agreements in regards to safe use of the internet and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. Staff also provides them with education and training about risks such as the use of the e-safety training pack. Staff ensure there is suitable supervision where required.

Restraints and sanctions within the home are low. There have been no restraints since the last inspection, sanctions have also reduced and are used appropriately. This reflects the positive approach used by staff and observed in practice during the visit.

Staff undertake excellent key worker sessions that evidence in depth debates and staff listening to young people and responding to any concerns they may have. Young people obtain welcome booklets when they arrive with complaint procedures clearly explained and can use the complaint procedures to take issues forward. Although young people have not made complaints, they are aware of the process.

The locality risk assessment is thorough. The Registered Manager consults with the local police community support officer, Local Safeguarding Children Board and community services. This use of local knowledge means that the Registered Manager and staff are fully aware of potential risks that young people face within the community.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The Registered Manager has been in post for over three years and is well qualified and experienced to manage the home. She holds the Registered Managers Award qualification. The statement of purpose reflects the ethos of the home and the Registered Manager's aims for the young people. Young people obtain a welcome booklet on admission, which is age appropriate and informative. Staff attends regular team meetings and shares their views with the Registered Manager. The meetings are constructive and cover a variety of topics including monitoring, research, staff morale, young people's care plans and plans for activities. There is a focus on developing the service for young people and providing consistent care. Good professional relationships between the home and partner agencies results in highly effective multi-agency working to ensure the best possible care and experiences for young people. The Registered Manager works closely with the local authority to provide education for young people who do not attend school, any short falls in provision are funded privately by the organisation. One young person receives extra school tuition and has a mentor. The Registered Manager has forged good relationships with stakeholders. One Social Worker attributed a young person's academic success to the staff. The Social Worker said 'she has a better future now and we can plan forward, the staff has helped her to be more stable'. Another Social Worker reported that the Registered Manager 'advocates for the young person as much as she can, she always sends clear, weekly reports'. Staff receive regular effective, reflective supervision, which focuses on the young people and any staffing issues. Staff morale is good and strong relationships exist with the young people and staff members. One member of staff said 'I am happy at work, I look forward to coming to work'. Another member of staff reported that the organisation is 'a good organisation to work for, support and training is good'. The Registered Manager is committed to developing the service by learning from external monitoring processes and internal auditing, evaluation and analysis. She is aware of areas of improvement such as ensuring notifications to Ofsted are timely. The Registered Manager strives to create a family home where all young people can achieve personal and academic success.	

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 looked after children 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 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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