

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	25/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC014650
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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, West Sussex RH16 1XQ

Responsible individual	Peter Kazmarski
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Suzy Lemmy

Inspection date	25/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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 this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The requirements and recommendations at the previous inspection have been effectively addressed. The organisation's protocol regarding young people missing from home has been reviewed. Staff adhere to the revised procedures. A workforce plan is in place to ensure that all staff have the level 3 qualification or are working towards it, including agency staff. Young people make good progress. One young person is now able to travel independently. Staff set small, achievable steps to enable her to accomplish this safely. The young person is very proud of her achievement. Staff support young people to become independent. They help them to complete job application forms and apply for jobs. Staff supported one young person to gain part-time employment. Staff teach young people to budget, shop and cook for themselves in preparation for independent living. One young person is now able to live on her own without additional support. Individual risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, resulting in an environment where the welfare of young people is protected. Staff generally have positive relationships with young people and provide consistent expectations and boundaries outlined in the young people's risk assessment. As a result, two young people have significantly reduced their missing from care episodes. Staff work closely with professionals to keep these young people safe. Staff have not been able to engage with one young person who continued to put himself at risk. Staff are unable to prevent this young person from going missing from the home and putting himself in danger. They did not seek feedback from independent return to home interviews for this young person, so are unable to learn from these discussions. There was an increasing concern that other young people may go missing alongside the one with this ingrained behaviour. Consequently, the service managers gave his local authority a short notice period and made arrangements for him to be moved to another placement as soon as he returned to the home. This meant that the young person did not have a positive experience of the end of his placement. The manager recognises that there are lessons to be learned from the difficult ending of this young person's placement.	

Planned transitions for two young people have been very positive. Staff supported one young person to successfully move to independent living from the home's secure base. This young person's goal was to move to her own accommodation. Staff ensured that the placement remained open so that she had a safety net for the first month. This young person is now living independently, attending college and has a part-time job. Staff worked closely with adult services to help another young person to make the transition to a supported placement. This young person was fully involved in his transition. Staff continued to visit him during the settling in period. He has managed the move well and has adapted to the new placement.

An admission for one young person was very positive. She was clear about what to expect when she arrived. She was given the children's guide, which helped her to be clear about expectations. However, she was not aware that she could question some of the safety measures in place, for example, night door alarms. Young people's meetings have not been held regularly, which means that these types of issues are not discussed or reviewed.

All young people attend full-time education. They have college places identified for the new academic year. One young person is attending a summer school and is working towards qualifications. Another young person has taken some GCSEs. This is a great achievement. She has previously had poor school attendance and has managed full attendance while at the home.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and respond to attention to their individual needs. They have learned positive coping strategies for when they are frustrated or upset. There have been no incidents requiring physical intervention since the last inspection. This leads to greater stability. Young person's feedback questionnaires collated by the home are positive. One young person wrote 'the staff should keep doing their jobs, they are amazing' and another young person said 'I really enjoy it at this home'.

Interagency working is good. The manager has established professional working relationships with the young people's local authorities. A social work manager recorded, 'The professional network is very impressed with the work that [the home] has undertaken with the young person and with the progress she has made in placement.' Another social worker stated that she is 'very, very happy with the quality of care'.

The current manager was appointed in June 2016, having previously been deputy manager. She is applying to be a registered manager for the home. The manager is proactively involved in monitoring individual care arrangements. She is very aware of the progress of young people and how to support the staff to achieve measurable positive outcomes. Staff describe her as 'approachable, her door is always open'. She ensures that staff have regular supervision and are encouraged to learn new skills so that they can be promoted within the organisation.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/08/2015	Full	Good
13/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/05/2014	Full	Good

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
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to a young person's experience at the end of the placement, young people should— (1)(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	30/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- Young people must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11).
- Homes should take account of information provided by return from home interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30).

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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