

SC014650

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The staff at this home provide care for up to four children whose support needs are primarily in relation to their emotions and behaviours and/or learning disabilities.

The provider has links with a range of therapeutic services that can be made available to children depending on their needs.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2019.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

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: 16 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2022	Full	Good
06/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/05/2019	Full	Good
17/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff are vibrant, enthusiastic and child-focused. They encourage children to leave their 'stamp' on the home. Children display artwork and choose the decor of the home and Christmas decorations. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

Staff prioritise making time for the children. The children can talk to staff about their worries. Children also have key members of staff to speak to. Children say that they feel that the staff understand them.

Staff help children to understand the progress that they are making. They use visual tools to show children how they are making progress and they offer incentives. Staff review goals with the children and celebrate their achievements, with balloons, banners and trips away. As a result, children's self-esteem has improved.

Children are doing well at school. Those who have not attended school previously are now accessing education. One of the children is making exceptional progress at school, working towards A-Levels. Staff encourage children to do their own shopping and cooking. Children are developing independent living skills in preparation for adulthood.

Children enjoy a variety of activities. Staff take children to theme parks and Halloween events and on trips away. Staff nurture children's talents. One child is an elite athlete in wheelchair basketball. Staff take the child to games across the country. The staff capture memories for the children in life-story books filled with photos.

However, the children's care plans do not reflect the children's individual identities. The plans also include institutional language such as 'absconding' and 'YP'.

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

Staff understand risks and help children to keep themselves safe. Discussions about safeguarding are central to staff supervisions and team meeting agendas. Staff promote healthy lifestyles for the children. They use conversations to encourage healthy eating habits and reduce drug use. Staff responded well when a child was a victim of assault when out in the local area. Staff encourage children to have positive relationships with friends.

Staff help children to understand boundaries and have conversations to communicate rules and expectations. They talk to children to help them to understand being respectful of other's sexual identity

Allegations against staff are managed well. The manager has agreed plans with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to reduce the risk of frequent allegations

against staff. When allegations do not meet the threshold for a referral to the LADO, the manager always informs the child's social worker.

Staff respond very effectively when children go missing from the home. Clear plans guide staff on how to reduce episodes of children going missing and where they are likely be found. Social care professionals say that staff go above and beyond to make sure that children are safe when they are missing. When children are at high risk of harm, the manager works closely with police and social care services, ensuring that children are found and returned safely.

There have been incidents of bullying between children. Staff have challenged bullying through conversations with the children and reinforcing boundaries, although in one case appropriate action was not taken promptly.

The home has door alarms on children's bedrooms. The policy for their use is generic and has not been reviewed recently. Not all the children have written consent for their use. One child recently requested to have the alarm removed but following a conversation with staff decided to keep it. This has not been recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He is child-focused and has clear oversight of the children's progress.

The manager works well with their deputy managers to develop the home's culture. The managers have effective relationships with other professionals. There has been little staff turnover since the last inspection. This has created stability for the children and they have strong relationships with staff.

The manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses and has a development plan in place to address the weaknesses. The manager seeks to learn from incidents. Although physical intervention is not used often, when it is used, the manager ensures that children and staff have a debrief. The manager uses the learning from these incidents to update plans of care.

Staff receive good-quality training and they can also request training specific to children's needs. Staff have recently had training on nutrition and healthy diets from a personal trainer. As a result, they have created structure and prompts to help the children to eat more healthily.

Children's moves into the home have been well managed. One child has settled in well and is making progress. However, when another child moved into the home, the information provided by the local authority was not correct. This resulted in the child's placement breaking down very quickly. The manager has reflected on this and is now planning to check information with family members and other professionals before a child moves in.

Staff have regular supervision and find this helpful. The manager uses supervision to address poor practice. Leaders are taking steps to support staff when there have been patterns of poor practice. However, staff supervisions are not always recorded and some staff have not had their annual appraisal.

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— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(1)(C)) In particular, staff must have an annual appraisal.	20 December 2022
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(b)) In particular, consent from the local authority should be sought for the use of door alarms. The use of door alarms should be reviewed to ensure they are no more intrusive than necessary.	20 December 2022
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(vi))	20 December 2022

In particular, the manager should take prompt action to address bullying that is a concern to other children's safety.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure the plans for children are personalised, taking into account the child's identity, including their gender and sexuality. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

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 Ltd

Registered provider address: My Choice Children's Homes Ltd, Unit 3a, Mill Green Business Estate, Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath RH16 1XQ

Responsible individual: Dawn Ives

Registered manager: Tom Chilton

Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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