

SC025657

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to 11 children. The home's statement of purpose states that the home looks after children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The home registered in 2001. The registered manager post is currently vacant. However, the new manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 4 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 10 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2020	Full	Good
13/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/06/2018	Full	Inadequate
01/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

This children's home is set out across three neighbouring properties. The provider describes these as units. Since the last inspection, some areas of the home have been repainted; however, the overall environment remains poor.

While some children's bedrooms are suitable, inspectors found other children's bedrooms without dressing tables or chests of drawers. Some children's wardrobes were locked or used for storing office paperwork. Inspectors found cobwebs in bathrooms and toilets, torn tablecloths and worn-out sofas. One child said, 'I want my wardrobe unlocked,' and another child said, 'It could be better in the communal areas.'

Staff help children to choose a wealth of activities at home and in the community. Children enjoy swimming, trips to the cinema, bowling and shopping alongside cake baking and parties in the home. However, due to staff maternity leave, a child's favourite horse-riding therapy has stopped and a child's longed for bicycle birthday present has only been ridden once. This means that children's wishes and preferred activities are not prioritised.

Children make progress living in the home. A parent said that their child is 'making good progress'. Children's individualised independence programmes set out their targets, such as the steps to making a cup of tea. Staff review the children's targets. However, when targets are achieved, staff do not consider additional independence targets. This limits children's overall progress.

Parents report that communication with the staff is good. A parent said that staff 'loved' her child, like any good parent would. Staff support children to maintain their important relationships with face-to-face, telephone or video-call family time. A child said, 'It's a good place. The food is delicious. Staff are kind, and they support me.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The provider's immediate response to the ongoing investigation into child protection allegations requires improvement to be good. The manager held an urgent staff meeting to highlight the concerns; however, some staff did not attend. There is no record that these staff were made aware of the nature of the allegations and the manager's reminder to all staff to refresh their safeguarding and child protection knowledge.

Placement matching undertaken by leaders and managers is not robust. The home's compatibility risk assessment lacks sufficient detail. As a result, new placements have caused significant disruption and challenges to staff and the children already

living in the home. A child said, 'It was like living through stress. It was a nightmare,' and staff reported feeling 'battered'. The manager said, 'Lessons have been learned.'

Leaders and managers do not follow the home's staff recruitment procedures. Records examined lacked any evidence that managers have followed up employee references appropriately. This compromises safe staff recruitment and potentially places children at risk.

Children's positive behaviour support plans are detailed. Children's triggers for any challenging behaviours are set out alongside staff guidance to support and help de-escalate children's complex behaviours. This is largely effective. When staff use physical restraint to manage children's challenging behaviour, the action is necessary to prevent harm or injury to children or others.

Children's access to the internet is safely monitored. CCTV is used in the office areas of the home. A child reported that he felt uncomfortable with this. Furthermore, there is no record of consent for this on file from those with parental authority. This is contrary to regulation.

The home's children's register does not include the legal status of the children in the home as required by regulation. This means that staff may not know who has parental responsibility for the children in their care.

Children spoken with during the inspection signed thumbs up or said that they feel safe. A parent said their child is 'happy'.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted and is awaiting her fit person interview. Staff praise the manager and describe her as 'a beautiful woman inside and out'.

Some staff do not have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the children living in the home. There is a lack of training in autism spectrum disorder, safeguarding, restraint, British sign language and Picture Exchange Communication System. This limits the staff's ability to keep children safe, communicate with the children and understand their wishes and feelings.

Leaders' and managers' quality assurance and management oversight need to be strengthened. For example, children's documents are unsigned and undated. Leaders and managers did not report an outbreak of COVID-19 in the home to Ofsted. This is contrary to regulation.

The home's statement of purpose is not up to date, and Ofsted has not received the home's quality of care review in a timely manner. The manager said that these documents had been sent to Ofsted. The inspector's further checks confirmed that

the provider's' email correspondence was not received. The manager agreed to resend them.

The inspector was made aware that the previous registered manager who resigned in Spring 2021 appears to have retained some management responsibilities in the home. His active involvement in the home's placement planning decisions may undermine the roles and responsibilities of the current manager's day-to-day decision-making in the home.

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 complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	31 March 2022

The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	31 March 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	31 March 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	31 March 2022
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—	31 March 2022

the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d))	
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— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)) In particular, when staff are unable to attend team meetings, ensure a record is kept that staff have read the team meeting notes.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to provide care and support to children in the home that is in line with the home's statement of purpose.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, in order for the children's home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, they continue to refurbish all areas of the homes' interior so that all areas of the home are of a similar suitable standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with appropriate furniture to store their personal items. In particular, children's bedrooms should have wardrobes and/or chests of drawers for their belongings. Subject to any identified risks, children's wardrobes should not be locked. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The registered person should ensure that staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings. In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that there are sufficient staffing levels so that children can continue with their preferred activities, such as bicycle riding and horse riding. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

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: SC025657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Creating Care Choices Limited

Registered provider address: 38 Castle Drive, Ilford, Essex IG4 5AE

Responsible individual: Harjit Sanghera

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Victoria Jones, Social Care Inspector

Margaret Burke, HMI Social Care Inspector

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