

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC029865
Type of inspection	Interim
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	Sandra Whyte
Inspector	Ruth Coler

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The preparations for young people moving into the home are managed well. A young person's compatibility with other young people already living at the home is comprehensively assessed. Staff gain information from a variety of relevant people, such as a young person's carers and social workers. This ensures that they have all possible details before deciding if it is right for a particular young person to come and live here. Staff carefully and attentively make the move a positive experience for all the young people. They support those young people already living at the home during the period another young person is moving in, recognising that this can be a difficult time for them as well. This results in little disruption for those living at the home and a successful introduction for the young person moving in. This helps the young people to form better relationships and has resulted in a settled home. Young people make progress living in this home. They know what difference being here has made to their lives and speak positively about how staff look after them. One young person said, 'I have tried to disrupt my placement, but staff won't let me.' Young people are encouraged to try new activities as well as remain involved in those they already enjoy. This has resulted in young people benefiting from a wider social network and gaining a more positive outlook about their lives. All young people make good progress educationally; those who previously found engaging with school difficult are now in full-time education. One young person has started work and has achieved a promotion in a short space of time. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and young people's health improves. Young people attend medical appointments, which they previously avoided. They engage in more physical activity, and learn to manage lifelong health conditions more effectively. Staff know each young person well and work hard to support them to learn how to manage difficult behaviours, regulate their emotions better and talk about difficult issues from their past. Young people have started instigating mediation sessions between themselves to resolve issues. One young person said, 'We try to work out problems between ourselves if we can, but if we can't staff help us.'	

Young people's good behaviour is promoted successfully. For example, where young people go missing, staff work with young people to identify the cause and make effective plans to help to decrease the number of incidences of their being absent. Where any new risks are identified, the risk assessments are reviewed and updated appropriately.

Safeguarding young people is a priority for staff. The staff team works diligently with other agencies, such as the police, to help young people learn how to protect themselves. A partnership has been formed between the home's staff and the police to help young people understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the community, and to improve young people's relationships with the police. Most safeguarding concerns are reported appropriately. However, managers must ensure that any such concerns are reported to the relevant safeguarding team, even where it is primarily the responsibility of another agency.

The manager is developing the service well. She is proud of the work she and her team achieve. She continuously looks to make improvements which will help young people make progress. She has ensured that the requirements and recommendations from the last report are met and regularly monitors the effectiveness of the services provided. Young people and staff spoke positively about the manager's leadership and management style. They consider she is easy to talk to, listens to their views and takes action where needed.

There are sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of the young people. Recorded individual staff lone working assessments are not in place. Decisions about whether a particular member of staff should work on their own with a young person may not, therefore, take into account all relevant issues.

The training that staff receive is implemented in practice and makes a difference to young people's care and their lives. This ensures that staff have a good knowledge of any specific needs young people may have, as well as their more generic needs.

Information about this children's home

The home caters for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is one of a number of children's homes owned by the same provider. Young people are able to access the organisation's off-site school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/08/2016	Full	Good
28/05/2015	Full	Good
13/01/2015	Full	Good
07/08/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. In particular, where another agency does not report a child protection concern which affects a young person living at the home, the registered person must ensure that this occurs as soon as possible.	18/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that, where staff will be working alone with a young person, they have completed a lone working assessment.

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 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 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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