

SC407169

Registered provider: Choices Home For Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and registered with Ofsted in December 2018.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/12/2017	Full	Good
29/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/06/2016	Full	Outstanding

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(d)) This particularly refers to assessing the need for bedroom door alarms based upon the individual needs of young people.	31/07/2019
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(2)(e))	31/12/2019
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	31/07/2019
The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33(1)(a))	31/07/2019
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	31/07/2019

Recommendations

- Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20)
In particular, that a clear rationale should be provided for the removal of any belongings, and that their retention should be reviewed.
- Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information.

(‘Guide to the children’s home regulations including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.19)

- For children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (‘Guide to the children’s home regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, that damage to plaster work and the overall decorative condition of children’s bedrooms are addressed in a timely manner.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Over time, through the care and attention that staff offer, young people’s self-worth and confidence grow. Because of the nurturing environment they live in, young people make positive changes to their behaviour and begin to accept the boundaries that are set.

Young people feel listened to and cared about. The home environment helps young people to better manage their disappointments and frustrations and they spend increasing amounts of time with staff.

Staff work hard to establish strong and trusting relationships with young people. The challenges that some young people’s behaviours can present are responded to by staff with patience, kindness and understanding.

Young people value the time that staff spend with them. This time is both focused and purposeful and young people learn skills to help them manage their emotions. When young people’s progress begins to falter, staff act quickly to identify additional support.

Staff respond well to young people’s changing needs and they are supported to make gradual and age-appropriate transitions to independence. For example, with staff support and oversight, one young person is now managing her own medication.

The home offers good space and facilities for young people to enjoy. However, not all young people are given sufficient storage for their belongings and some repairs have not been attended to in a timely manner.

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

Young people become increasingly safe through living at the home. This is underpinned through staff understanding and responding appropriately to the risks associated with young people’s behaviours. Young people said that they feel safe at the home.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's emotional needs. They are vigilant and alert to the changes in young people's presentation, and act appropriately to prevent escalation or behaviours that might pose a risk to the young people's welfare. As a result, incidents of missing from home and the need for physical intervention have significantly decreased.

When incidents do occur, young people are supported to reflect on the emotions that led to the behaviour. This offers young people opportunities to develop self-awareness and skills in self-management.

Although the manager has addressed and investigated an allegation made by a young person, there is not a full audit trail of the outcome. For example, written confirmation from the designated officer has not been secured, nor was the young person written to regarding the outcome.

At the last inspection, requirements were made regarding the use of door alarms on young people's rooms and the safe administration of medication. The former requirement has not been met. Although a new system was introduced regarding medication, at this inspection it was found that staff had disposed of instructions differentiating two types of inhaler used by a young person. Staff do not know why two inhalers are used, or the differences between them.

Room searches are not performed frequently by the staff. However, when they do occur, it is not always clear why some of young people's belongings have been removed. In addition, the timescales for the items being returned, or otherwise, are not recorded.

Since the last inspection, rewards and incentives for positive behaviour have been individualised and made more spontaneous. However, some of the responses of staff to young people's behaviours are not restorative or educative in nature.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and was registered to manage the home in December 2018. He is knowledgeable about the young people's plans, their strengths and vulnerabilities. Young people feel that he knows them well and they trust him.

The manager leads by example and the staff work as a team to ensure that young people receive individualised care.

Since the last inspection, risk assessments, planning documents and behaviour support plans have been improved. As a result, a requirement made at the previous inspection with regard to these has been met. Other improvements include better planning and focus by staff regarding key-working time spent with young people.

Staff are fully supported by the management team via formal and informal supervision.

In addition, young people's views regarding staff are sought in order to inform annual appraisals.

At the last inspection, a requirement was made regarding the stability of staffing at the home. Due in part to changes in working rotas, over half of the staff have left the home since December 2018. Although these staff members have been replaced by experienced staff, stability of staffing has yet to be evidenced.

To improve planning and consolidate changes, the new manager has introduced a workforce development plan. However, this plan does not specify the minimum number of shadow shifts nor training, to be completed by new staff prior to them commencing on shift.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC407169

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Choices Home For Children Limited

Registered provider address: C/o Afford Bond, 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7ED

Responsible individual: Linda Heywood

Registered manager: Kristian Greenacre

Inspectors

Pauline Yates: social care inspector

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