

2724171

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. It is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. One child spoke with the inspector about their experiences of living there.

A new manager has been appointed and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 June 2026

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: 23 September 2025

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
23/09/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/10/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/06/2024	Full	Inadequate
21/11/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

The long-term absence of a permanent manager has led to gaps in management oversight and to children having mixed experiences. Some children living at the home make progress and others do not. The recent appointment of a new manager has led to positive changes for children; however, there has not been sufficient time for changes to be fully embedded and sustained.

Inspection judgements

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

Staffing changes and inconsistencies in leadership and management at the home mean that children's progress and experiences are varied. One child said, 'I give the home and the staff 10 out of 10.' Another child, who has lived in the home for over 3 years, feels unhappy and has made limited progress in all areas of their life. One child who left the home did not do so in a planned way. This did not help the child to have a positive experience of moving on from the home.

Relationships between staff and children are generally positive. Staff regularly talk to children about topics that are relevant to them and seek their wishes and views. However, on one occasion, a staff member used inappropriate language in front of children, which leaders and managers took swift action to address. Language used in records is not always helpful or child focused.

Since the appointment of a new manager, one child who had not attended health appointments for some time has recently engaged with appointments and had their outstanding health needs addressed. Staff encourage children to maintain a healthy lifestyle, including eating home-cooked meals. One child regularly attends a local gym with a staff member.

Children's progress with education is mixed. Two children attend alternative school provision regularly. However, one child has not attended an educational setting for some time, and staff do not regularly support or encourage them to engage with other educational activities or to maintain a structured daily routine.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them. The manager and staff have been consistent and committed in their approach to help build positive relationships with children's family members for the benefit of children. A social worker said, 'Staff have gone above and beyond to support a child's time with their family despite challenges.'

Children live in a warm and welcoming home, with a spacious and well-maintained garden. Their bedrooms are adequately furnished and personalised. However, some

communal areas are looking tired, with visible signs of damage, which detracts from a homely feel. This is something the manager had identified before the inspection and is taking action to address.

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

Children have individual risk and behaviour management plans. However, some information is out of date, and guidance for staff to follow to help keep children safe lacks clarity. The manager had identified this before the inspection and is taking action to address it.

There has been a reduction in safeguarding incidents recently. When children go missing from home, staff take swift and appropriate action to ensure that they return home quickly and safely.

Staff are trained in a therapeutic parenting model, which they are starting to embed into their everyday practice for the benefit of children. This has helped to reduce the need for staff to contact the police to help manage children's behaviour.

A therapist regularly visits the home to help support staff and children. However, their reports about children, with advice and guidance for staff, are not routinely shared with staff. This limits the impact of the therapeutic support available.

The use of medication is not always accurately recorded. This reduces the effectiveness of staff in managing and supporting children with their health needs.

Children can express their views, wishes and feelings freely to staff. When children make an allegation or a complaint, appropriate action is taken. Incidents are reported to Ofsted in a timely way and recorded appropriately.

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

Children and staff have experienced a period of management instability and change. During the long-term absence of a manager, senior staff stepped in to carry out some management duties, and a new manager started in the role recently. This has, however, meant that there have been gaps in management oversight and inconsistencies in the quality of care provided to the children. Other agencies have not always been challenged appropriately when documents needed for children have not been provided.

The new manager is ambitious and enthusiastic about making positive change and improving the quality of care provided to children. He is a strong advocate for children and works proactively and effectively with other agencies and professionals. One social worker described the new manager as 'great' and the communication as 'good'.



Staff enjoy working at the home, despite experiencing a challenging period of change in staffing. One staff member praised the help and support provided by the deputy in the manager's absence. The staff team works well together and is starting to provide stable and consistent care to the children.

Staff benefit from regular training opportunities to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. This includes bespoke training to equip them with the skills to meet the children's current and emerging needs.

Not all staff receive regular supervision. This limits the provider's opportunity to support staff to understand and meet the needs of children living at the home.

The manager has started to identify the strengths and areas of vulnerability in the home. He has introduced systems to monitor the quality of care and has plans in place to make improvements. However, there has not been sufficient time for this to be embedded.

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, The 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 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that all risk assessments contain up-to-date and relevant information with clear steps for staff to follow should an incident arise.	25 September 2026
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the	25 September 2026

competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ix)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that language used in records or with children recognises the need behind the behaviour and does not blame the child.	
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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are supported and encouraged to maintain a healthy routine that promotes their physical and emotional wellbeing.	25 September 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that each child with a plan to move out of the home has a comprehensive transition plan to meet their needs and that the needs of any child moving into the home are fully considered beforehand.	25 September 2026
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	25 September 2026
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	25 September 2026

help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ix))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(c))	25 September 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that action is taken when the placing authority does not provide the necessary documents in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home are maintained to a high standard and that the environment is homely and comfortable. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2724171

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Limited

Registered provider address: 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7ED

Responsible individual: Linda Heywood

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Zillah Brooks, Social Care Inspector

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