

SC008485

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. Inspectors were able to speak to one child.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025.

Inspection date: 22 May 2025

This monitoring visit

The purpose of the monitoring visit was to review the actions taken by the provider to meet the compliance notices served on 25 March 2025. The notices were served under Regulation 8, the education standard; Regulation 12, the protection of children standard; Regulation 13, the leadership and management standard; and Regulation 14, the care planning standard.

One child has left the home since the assurance inspection. No children have moved in.

The provider has revised the referral policy to ensure that the registered manager is consistently involved in all decision-making regarding children moving into the home. However, since this time, no children have moved into the home. Consequently, the regulator has been unable to assess the effectiveness of this change.

Repairs to the home identified at the assurance inspection have been completed. As a result of this, the physical environment is now safe and suitable for children.

All children now have an identified school place, and their engagement in education has improved. Individual education plans are in place to provide structure and routine when children are not in school. These plans include access to online educational resources. One child has been supported to complete their GCSE

examinations and attend college interviews in line with their academic goals. This reflects the staff team's commitment to supporting children's future aspirations.

Children are supported to engage in direct work that helps them to understand the risks associated with behaviours such as vaping and alcohol use. When safeguarding incidents occur, staff work with partner agencies to identify and put in place effective strategies to protect children and promote their welfare.

Leaders and managers responded appropriately to an allegation made by a child regarding the conduct of a staff member. The matter was thoroughly investigated, and action was taken to address shortfalls in staff practice. The child was informed of the outcome to provide assurance that their concerns are taken seriously and their welfare is prioritised.

The home is managed by a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager. Staff have confidence in his leadership and say that they are well supported.

There has been an increase in staff participation in training. Staff have completed training relevant to their role, such as training on safeguarding, medication administration and the management of allegations. This has improved the quality of care provided to children. Since completing medication training, there has been a measurable improvement in the accuracy and consistency of medication records.

Staffing arrangements have improved. Two residential support staff members have been recruited and are now working at the home. This strengthens the stability of the staff team and provides greater consistency of care for children.

There is improved management oversight of the home. Most incidents are now reviewed by leaders and managers to ensure that effective action is taken to safeguard children. Furthermore, concerns about staff performance are addressed to support best practice. There are still areas for improvement. Staff supervision is not taking place regularly, and not all significant incidents have been reviewed. Ofsted were also not informed of a serious incident at the home.

Following the monitoring visit, a case review was held where it was agreed that the provider has taken sufficient action to meet the steps in the compliance notices for Regulation 8, the education standard; Regulation 12, the protection of children standard; Regulation 13, the leadership and management standard and Regulation 14, the care planning standard.

Due to ongoing shortfalls in some areas of leadership and management and the regulator's inability to fully assess the proposed changes to the admission process for children moving into the home, requirements 13 and 14 will remain.

The other requirements made at the last inspection were not considered as part of the monitoring visit and have therefore been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
26/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/08/2023	Full	Inadequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h)) Leaders and managers must ensure that they continuously evaluate staff practice in the home and identify areas for learning and improvement. Furthermore, they must continuously monitor the care provided to children, as well as continuously reviewing systems and procedures in place to keep children safe.	7 August 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	7 August 2025

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the 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)(b) (2)(a)) Leaders and managers must ensure that children move into the home only when their needs and the needs of the children already living in the home have been considered. In addition, the placement should only be made if this is in the interest of all the children. Leaders and managers must ensure that the organisation's policies and procedures for identifying and agreeing a placement for a child to move into the home are child centred and include consultation with the home's manager to determine whether the home is suitable to meet the child's identified needs.	
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— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	7 August 2025

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; and are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(x)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that children are supported to address conflict and manage their relationships. Bullying behaviour and racist language must be challenged immediately, with ongoing work completed to support children's understanding of these impacts. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1) (a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv)(ix)). Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that children's plans are personalised, contain their views and wishes and are specific to their individual needs.	7 August 2025

The registered provider must also ensure that children are supported to understand their sexual identity and cultural heritage. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs; and if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that decisions regarding children’s education are consistently challenged and appropriately escalated. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	7 August 2025
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans;	7 August 2025

understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are supported to maintain their health and understand the dangers of smoking or vaping. Staff must be provided with clear guidance on how to respond when children bring smoking or vaping paraphernalia into the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	7 August 2025

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all physical interventions used are necessary to safeguard the child. The manager's evaluation must consider staff practice and whether the situation could have been managed differently to avoid an intervention. When physical interventions are used, the registered person must ensure that these are approved holds that the user has been trained to use. If unapproved holds are used, there must be extenuating circumstances for these to have been required. The registered person must ensure that children are spoken to by someone not involved in the incident to determine their feelings about it.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— 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; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all serious incidents are reported to the regulator.	7 August 2025

The registered person must ensure that allegations made by children are responded to in full, with external professionals consulted following these.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that the responsible individual receives meaningful and reflective practice-related supervision to support their management of the home. This was a requirement at the last inspection and has been restated.	7 August 2025

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC008485

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: James McDonald

Inspectors

Chibuzo Otache, Social Care Inspector

Aislinn Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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