

SC014650

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private organisation and provides care for up to four children. At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2024	Full	Outstanding
10/05/2023	Full	Good
29/11/2022	Full	Good
16/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home environment is welcoming and comfortable. Children's bedrooms have recently undergone extensive redecoration and have been personalised according to their wishes. Children's achievements are celebrated, with certificates and photos proudly displayed in communal areas of the home.

Children make great progress from their individual starting points. This is due to the staff team having a good understanding of each child's background and current needs. Staff have formed secure relationships with the children, allowing them to open up and express their feelings. These conversations have proved particularly important in terms of gaining new children's trust and supporting them through periods of crisis.

Staff clearly understand children's behaviours and what they are trying to communicate through them. This has enabled staff to know how best to support children. In one example, staff can encourage missing children's safe return to the home as soon as possible.

Staff manage children's healthcare needs effectively, liaising with external agencies and healthcare professionals to ensure that they receive good healthcare.

Staff listen to children's views, wishes and feelings and consider these when planning their care, arranging activities and deciding meal options, for example.

Staff always endeavour to provide a positive ending for children who are moving on from the home. This has enabled one child to successfully move into foster care, and another two children have successfully moved back into the care of their families. Managers have carefully planned new admissions and undergone robust matching processes. However, the views of resident children have not been recorded as part of this process.

Children are encouraged and supported to learn independent living skills appropriate to their individual needs. This phased approach has enabled one child to budget and prepare meals, as well as plan for their future, which includes considering whether semi-independent living should be their next step.

All children are in full-time education. Where appropriate, additional support has been put in place to ensure that children's education is provided according to their individual needs. This has only been possible because of staff's commitment and the time they devote to children's education.

While the manager and staff proactively advocate for the children, the children have not been offered their own advocate. This is a missed opportunity for children to be supported by an independent adult.

Managers and staff are committed to each child through good times as well as challenging times and are creative in their approach to providing a safe and stable home. This enables children to make mistakes, learn from them, and still feel a sense of belonging.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children's safety and well-being are at the centre of staff's practice. Incidents are extremely well managed. Staff appropriately attempt to de-escalate situations and have not used physical intervention since the last inspection. Detailed records and chronologies are shared with the professional network to ensure transparency and best practice, and regular multidisciplinary meetings are held to ensure that information is shared in a timely manner. Following incidents, the child receives support that enables them to reflect on the incident and their feelings at the time. The open culture of the home allows honest and meaningful conversations with children, as well as meaningful discussions around their safety and well-being.

Prevention of incidents and understanding children's challenging behaviours are important themes in their risk assessments and support plans. During periods of crisis, at no point have staff given up on the child or questioned whether the home is appropriate for them. This shows the staff's commitment and determination to breaking down barriers and demonstrating by their actions how much they care about the children and want the best for them, no matter what.

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the children and respond to any concerns swiftly. Staff work in line with safeguarding policies and procedures and escalate to professional networks, including police and other specialist services, to provide children with wraparound care and support. In times of crisis, managers have not always notified the regulator of serious incidents; however, they have prioritised children's safety.

Health and safety in the home, including fire risk, are effective. Children live in a safe environment, and staff and children understand their responsibilities in an emergency to keep themselves and others safe.

Professional feedback is unanimously positive, with many examples of individual children's progress. One family member has been extremely complimentary about the home and the support their child has received.

Staff treat the children with respect and understanding according to their individual needs and experiences. Staff provide consistent boundaries and transparency in their practice. This enables the children to feel safe and understand that there are natural consequences to their actions. Children's achievements are celebrated, regardless of how small they may be perceived to be. This helps build children's feelings of self-worth and confidence.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is committed to children's welfare and safety. The registered manager supports children in understanding their risk-taking behaviour and its consequences and helps them learn to identify the triggers so the frequency of risky situations reduces over time. The registered manager does not give up on children who might challenge the staff team.

The registered manager ensures that all incidents are followed up with children, helping them to reflect on what went wrong. Staff receive constructive and good-quality debriefs, allowing them to freely express their views and concerns. Therapeutic support is also provided to staff to ensure that they understand the needs of each child and how to best help keep them safe using a trauma-informed approach.

Managers and senior leaders acknowledge that the independent visitor could spend more time with the children to fully understand their views, wishes and feelings. This is a missed opportunity in terms of independent scrutiny and giving children regular access to an independent person.

Robust quality assurance is in place with managers' monthly monitoring and auditing. The registered manager has good oversight of the home, supported by a strong senior leadership team. The responsible individual is familiar with all the children and spends time with them during company events that take place throughout the year. Senior leaders regularly visit the home and support the manager.

The staff feel supported by the manager and valued as a team. Members of staff are actively encouraged and supported to progress to more senior roles. Staff are supported through team meetings and reflective group sessions. However, individual staff supervision sessions are not carried out at the frequency outlined in the company's policy.

Staff are provided with appropriate mandatory training as well as more specific training from the company's in-house trainer as and when behaviours and risks from the children become prevalent. Staff are trained on all relevant topics to provide the children with the right support. This ensures that a qualified staff team provides support and care to the children.

Staff sufficiency is good. Managers ensure that there is flexibility around their availability and always provide a management presence to ensure that children receive a service from a familiar and skilled workforce. While agency staff are used on occasion, the registered manager liaises closely with the staffing agency to ensure that staff are consistent in their attendance. This ensures that children are cared for and supported by people they are familiar with.

The registered manager recognises the importance of working in partnership with health and social care professionals and therapists to meet children's needs in all areas, and this

is resulting in consistent care for the children and progress in terms of their engagement in therapy.

The registered manager models effective, proactive and consistent collaboration with professionals. Relationships among staff and the professional network and the child's family members are transparent and supportive. This has resulted in excellent partnership working to provide the best outcomes for children.

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 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))	17 July 2025
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b))	31 July 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support, and, where possible, this should be provided by a person the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should only allow children to move into the home if they are satisfied that they can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs, as documented in their relevant plans, and have fully considered the impact on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, allowing them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC014650

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: My Choice Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 3a Mill Green Business Estate, Mill Green Road,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1XQ

Responsible individual: Dawn Ives

Registered manager: Brandyn McKenna

Inspector

Emma Haskell, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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