

SC029865

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 privately owned. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 19 October 2023.

The registered manager was not present for the inspection.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 September 2025

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: 7 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2025	Full	Good
12/12/2023	Full	Good
07/02/2023	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The overall judgement is requires improvement to be good because of shortfalls in how children are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

The support that staff provide to the children to better understand their identities is inconsistent. One child has received specialist therapeutic support to reflect on their sexuality. This has had a positive impact on their well-being and resulted in a reduction in harmful behaviour. However, another child has not received help from staff to improve their understanding of their family background and cultural heritage. As a result, the child is unclear about the country they were born in and their early life history.

Some children attend part-time education, which is in line with their plans. When children are not attending schooling full time, there are no clear plans for staff to support them with educational activities in the home or community. This limits opportunities for children to have informal education experiences and be prepared to return to education.

Children say they have trusting relationships with staff. One child was subject to a serious allegation by another child and said that the support they received from staff during the investigation was 'fantastic'. Children live in a home where they are free from judgement. Children talk to staff openly about the challenges they experience in their lives.

Children are making progress because staff listen to them and involve them in their care. Children say that staff act promptly when they make requests. Staff understand the progress that children are making and how this progress is individual and important. For example, one child's self-esteem and confidence have improved greatly, allowing them to engage more positively with the world around them.

Children are being helped to improve their health and manage lifelong conditions. Their health needs have been identified and addressed. They have access to local health services when they need them. Leaders have arranged for one child to receive an assessment for a neurological condition so that their needs can be better understood.

Children who have moved on from the home have experienced well-planned moves. One child recently reunified with their family following a gradual increase in the time they spent visiting, which helped them to prepare. For another child, leaders found they were no longer able to meet the child's needs but continued to support the child

until a more suitable home could be found. This reduced the disruption the child experienced as far as possible.

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

There has been a high number of incidents where children have been missing from home since the last inspection. When children are missing, staff work closely with partner agencies, such as the police, and reach out to those who may know where the child could be. However, there has been mixed success in reducing children's missing incidents. The frequency of one child's missing episodes reduced when a more formal arrangement to allow them to visit their friends was created. However, one child's high-risk missing incidents continue to increase, and there are concerns from staff about the safety of the child when they are missing from home.

Staff have not always taken effective action to ensure children get the medical help they need quickly. On one occasion, there was a significant delay in staff accessing emergency medical assistance for a child who had taken an overdose when away from the home. This delay had the potential to have a significant impact on the child's health. The management review of this incident did not identify any reflections about the effectiveness of the response from staff.

Allegations are not always managed effectively. When children make allegations of abuse against staff who work in the home, leaders take prompt action to investigate their concerns and work closely with safeguarding partners such as the local authority designated officer. However, on one occasion, a member of staff who was subject to an allegation of harm was allowed to continue working with children in another setting despite the investigation into their practice having not yet concluded. Leaders could not demonstrate that they had fully considered the potential risk to other children or how they had mitigated this risk.

The use of physical restraint by staff is very rare. Records of restraint are detailed and are appropriately reviewed by managers to identify any opportunities for learning. Staff help children to reflect on their experiences so that they better understand how to keep themselves safe following incidents that put them at risk. The home uses a restorative approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result, there have been no consequences given to children since the last inspection.

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

Systems used by managers to monitor the quality of care provided by staff are not yet effective. For example, there is not always a clear correlation between the plans for children that have been created by managers and the objectives stated in children's statutory care plans. As a result, managers are unable to ensure that staff are working towards achieving children's agreed goals. Additionally, the home environment is generally well maintained, and children's artwork is proudly displayed

around the home. However, further attention to hygiene and cleanliness is needed in some areas. For instance, a considerable build-up of mould was on the ceiling of a bathroom used by children.

The staff use motion sensors on the doors of children's bedrooms and exits from the home to monitor children's movement overnight. Managers have assessed the suitability of these arrangements to ensure their use is proportionate to the needs of children. However, these sensors are in use throughout the day. This means that children may be subjected to unnecessary monitoring, which is not in line with their plans or organisational policy.

There have been delays in the reporting of serious incidents to Ofsted, which undermines regulatory oversight. The management systems in place are not effective at ensuring that notifications are sent within the required time frames.

Staff say that the support they get from managers is good and they regularly receive practice-related supervision that focuses on the needs of the children. Senior leaders recognise the effect that a high frequency of behaviour that challenges has had on the morale of the staff team. New staff are well prepared for their roles by a comprehensive induction and training programme, which ensures they have the skills to meet the needs of the children they are caring for.

Feedback from professionals who have worked with the home say that managers communicate with them well. They are positive about the care that children receive and how this helps children to overcome their past experiences. One social worker said, '[Name of children's home] have worked tirelessly to support [name of child].'

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 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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	3 October 2025
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— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(h))	10 October 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are effective systems in place to enable them to identify and address any shortfalls in the maintenance and cleanliness of the home. The registered person must also ensure that children's most up-to-date statutory care plans are held and used to inform the care that children receive from staff.	
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; 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— 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. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff work with children to help children understand their background and family heritage in ways that are accessible and appropriate to them.	10 October 2025
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— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that where children are not in full-time education, there are clear plans to	10 October 2025

structure their day when they are not in school, with activities and tasks that relate to their plans.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that any modifications to the environment of the home are made only where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare and that these measures are only used in line with the organisation's own policies. This is specific to the door sensors currently used to monitor movement in and out of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: SC029865

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: Francis McCarogher

Inspector

Glen Strowbridge, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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