

SC390785

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 and provides care for up to four children who may experience social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The provider operates several other homes in the region.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2018.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 16 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/07/2024	Full	Good
03/01/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
09/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress because staff have formed secure relationships with them. In some cases, this has taken a considerable amount of time. For one child, the staff team's tenacity has enabled them to trust adults. The child has grown in confidence and has begun to speak about their feelings. Staff use key-work sessions to have meaningful conversations about issues that are important to children. These sessions also help to strengthen relationships between children and staff.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are given high priority. Children's voices are heard, and their preferences are always considered when making decisions about care, activities and meals.

Staff show consideration and kindness towards the children and each other. This contributes towards the 'family feel' of the home and the supportive team culture. Interactions between children and adults are warm and nurturing, and children are treated with unconditional love and care.

Children's healthcare needs are managed very well. There is clear documentation to ensure that children's medication is administered safely and that there is close liaison with external agencies and healthcare professionals. On occasions when children are fearful or reluctant to attend health appointments, staff are relentless in their support to help them reconsider. One child's phobia of the dentist has emerged recently, and staff have sought therapeutic input to provide the child with additional support to attend their next appointment.

Children are encouraged to participate in various activities. For example, some children enjoy going to gymnastics club at school, and others enjoy going to the gym every day. This helps to keep children physically fit and has had a positive impact on their mental health. It has given some children more positive ambitions for their future.

All children attend education suited to their individual needs and care plans. Most of the children also access and engage in therapy and have regular contact with their families. One child requested additional family time, and they now enjoy time on their own with their parent, which has improved their relationship. Another child enjoys activities and events with their siblings, who live in the organisation's other homes.

Children thrive because they experience stability at this home, including in the senior leadership team, the management team and the staff team. Children speak very highly of the care and support that they receive. They say that they feel safe and well looked after.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Children's bedrooms are personalised, with displays of certificates and achievements on the walls.

While the registered manager and staff are strong advocates for the children, the children have not been offered their own advocates. Children have not been affected by this, but it is a missed opportunity for them to learn that they can receive support from an independent adult.

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

Children become increasingly safe because staff get to know them well and understand how to support them when they are struggling to manage their emotions. Staff make effective use of de-escalation strategies, and this has reduced the frequency of behavioural incidents. Staff have not used physical intervention since the last inspection.

The registered manager's review of incidents is reflective. Potential triggers for children are identified, and guidance is provided to staff about adapting their approach to reduce the risk of a recurrence. Support for children post-incident is delivered in an empathetic way, giving the child the opportunity to reflect on the incident and how they were feeling at the time. This helps children to identify safer ways of expressing themselves.

The culture of the home is that mistakes happen, but they can be learned from, without any fear of judgement or chastisement. Children have occasionally expressed fear of having to leave the home when things have gone wrong. However, the manager and staff team are deeply committed to ensuring that children feel loved and wanted. This gives children a deep sense of belonging.

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the children and respond to any safeguarding concerns swiftly. Staff work in line with safeguarding policies and escalate concerns to children's professional networks when necessary. As a result, children receive effective wraparound care and support.

Recruitment practices are thorough and follow safer recruitment principles. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who are suitably experienced and of good character.

Children's use of the internet is closely monitored through parental controls. As a result, children can access the internet safely in the home. However, children are not provided with sufficient support about how to stay safe online, and this has the potential to make them unsafe when they are away from the home and in the future.

Prevention of incidents is an important theme in children's care plans and risk assessments. Children rarely go missing, but when they do, staff follow protocols and liaise with relevant professionals to ensure the safe return of the child as soon as possible. On occasion, managers have failed to notify Ofsted about serious incidents. Although incidents that have been notified to Ofsted have been managed well, failing to notify Ofsted of some incidents limits the regulator's ability to monitor the management response.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is fiercely ambitious about what the children and staff team can achieve. Being looked after by a consistent group of adults has created a solid foundation for children, and they are thriving in all areas of their lives.

Staff report feeling valued and supported by the registered manager. The registered manager and staff speak passionately about giving children the best quality of care and helping them reach their full potential.

There is an open and honest culture that promotes the message that there is always room for learning and development. Everyday practice, formal supervision sessions, and team meetings are extremely reflective and focused on improving children's lives.

Staff training and input from therapists equip staff with a trauma-informed approach to meeting children's needs. When they are ready, staff are actively encouraged and supported to progress to more senior roles.

The registered manager is committed to ensuring children's welfare and safety. They support children in understanding their behaviour and potential consequences and help them learn to identify the triggers. The registered manager does not give up on children who might challenge the staff team.

The registered manager uses robust quality assurance processes and has highly effective oversight of the home. There is a strong senior leadership team available for support. The responsible individual spends lots of time with the children and knows them extremely well.

The independent person, who visits monthly, does not spend sufficient time with the children to ensure that they are capturing children's views on the care that they receive. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that the visitor has a well-rounded view of children's experiences. Leaders are aware of this shortfall and are taking steps to address it.

The registered manager models effective, proactive and consistent collaboration with external professionals. Relationships between the home and children's professional networks and children's families are transparent and mutually 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 requirement

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
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. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))	26 August 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 chosen by the child. 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 ensure that children are supported in accessing the internet safely. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in Regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home that the

registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: SC390785

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: Stuart Halsey

Inspector

Emma Haskell, 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
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