

SC436559

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

At the time of the inspection, five children were living in the home, and the inspectors spoke to all of them about their experiences of living here.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025.

Inspection dates: 31 July and 1 August 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: 30 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2024	Full	Good
06/06/2023	Full	Good
02/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say they feel happy and are settled living in this home. Relationships between children and staff are consistently warm and positive. Staff show a genuine commitment to children in their care. They regularly celebrate achievements and advocate strongly on each child's behalf. This positivity comes through clearly in the way staff talk about children's personalities, progress and future goals. These positive interactions help children to feel valued and understood.

Children are making steady progress in key areas of their development, with staff helping them build confidence, learn important life skills and work towards personal targets. Progress is tracked through individual sessions, which also help children explore and understand the issues that affect them.

All the children are engaged in education, except for one child who is new to the home. For this child, plans are in place but require further development to ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach. One child who came to live at the home before the summer holiday was able to have a taster fortnight at a new school to prepare them for the new term in September. Staff are proactive in liaising with education providers to secure appropriate provision.

Children's health needs are well met. Children are registered with local health services and attend regular appointments. Staff promote healthy lifestyles and ensure that children receive the support they need to maintain both physical and emotional well-being.

Children's moves into and on from the home are not always planned and their needs are not fully considered alongside the needs of the children already living in the home. Consequently, several children have moved on from the home in an unplanned way as staff were not able to meet their needs. Leaders and managers are implementing changes to the admissions process to ensure that these issues are addressed.

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

Children say they feel safe living in the home. They are confident that staff will respond appropriately to any concerns and are comfortable seeking support when needed. This sense of safety contributes to their overall emotional well-being and stability.

The number of incidents in the home is reducing. Staff are proactive in identifying triggers and implementing strategies to de-escalate situations. This has led to a calmer environment where children are better able to manage their emotions and behaviours.

Episodes of children going missing from the home have significantly reduced. This is mainly due to some children going missing from the home when their risks were not fully

known. When children do go missing, staff respond swiftly and effectively and work closely with external agencies to ensure that children are safeguarded. Children are supported to understand the risks associated with going missing and are encouraged to make safer choices.

Risks are well understood by staff and are clearly documented. Risk management plans are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Staff work alongside other professionals to prioritise children's safety.

Reasons for monitoring and surveillance are not fully understood or fully explained to children and visitors. The rationale for the use of door alarms on children's bedrooms is not always clear. In addition, there is no clear policy regarding the use of the camera-activated doorbell at the home. This creates ambiguity around its purpose, particularly in relation to safeguarding and privacy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a clear and well-communicated vision for the home. This vision is focused on creating a nurturing and safe environment for children. Staff understand and support this direction, which is reflected in the home's daily practice.

Team meetings are now held regularly and are more structured. Staff report that these meetings provide a valuable space for reflection, planning and sharing updates. Minutes are recorded and actions are followed up, contributing to improved communication and consistency across the team.

Training is well managed and responsive to the needs of the children. Staff have access to core training and additional modules tailored to specific needs. For example, when a child with particular needs moved in, staff undertook targeted training to ensure they could provide appropriate support.

The manager demonstrates a strong understanding of safeguarding and welfare. She has good oversight and is proactive in identifying risks and ensuring that protective measures are in place. However, there are gaps in the frequency of supervision for staff, especially when staff are in their induction and probation period. This means that staff do not always have a specific time to reflect on the work they are doing with children. This has been addressed more recently.

Oversight of children's case records by the manager has been lacking. Care plans and placement plans are missing and return interviews have not been carried out each time a child returns from being missing. The manager has not been proactive in escalating these concerns to senior managers for steps to be taken to remedy these issues with placing authorities.

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 may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d) (2)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all monitoring and surveillance measures are only used when required to keep children safe and that their use is kept under review.	24 October 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development and; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that supervision is reflective and in line with the provider's policies relating to supervision of staff.	24 October 2025
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.	24 October 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that arrangements are in place to—

ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;

manage and review the placement of each child in the home;
and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that records are a correct reflection of a child's life and that legal documents from the local authority are placed on each child's record. In addition, when children are admitted to the home, risk assessments must be completed to ensure that staff understand how to care for children.

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: SC436559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Linda Heywood

Registered manager: Emma Boyle

Inspectors

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector
Danielle Allen, Social Care Inspector

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