

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	05/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC062931
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Channels and Choices Kent LLP
Registered provider address	31 St George's Place, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1XD

Responsible individual	Martin Scholfield
Registered manager	Ty Warncken
Inspector	Helen Lee

Inspection date	05/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. All young people have good-quality care plans in place and they have contributed to their placement plans. Therefore, young people are aware of their backgrounds and are involved in plans for their future. These plans, along with a range of visual child-friendly charts and diagrams, enabled one young person to move on positively as planned to a foster home. This young person and the family are still provided with excellent transition advice and support from the home. Young people state that they are very happy at the home. Relationships between young people and staff are positive, warm and friendly. Staff foster humour and clear boundaries and expectations to provide young people with a stable, homely experience. As a result, young people continue to receive structured, planned care which meets their individual needs. This is reflected in the minimal use of sanctions. Staff provide a highly individualised and child-focused service, which means that young people's individual needs are well met. A parent commented, 'It's been peace of mind for me knowing that they have been so well cared for.' The young people are confident and comfortable in talking to staff about any concerns. There have been two formal complaints since the last inspection. These were investigated by the manager, which in turn led to improvement in practice. Education is highly valued by staff on behalf of young people. Staff are ambitious for them to succeed to improve their future life chances. One young person is being supported to transition into the secondary school of his choice. The young people are doing well at school with very good attendance and are receiving support from staff to ensure the next stage of their education is appropriate to their specific talents and aptitudes. Staff meet the individual health needs of each young person and a therapist concluded that, 'This young person is much more able to get in touch with their real feelings in the moment. Presentation and hygiene have been much improved.' Staff are skilled at talking with young people about the risks that they place themselves at and the potential consequences of their actions. However, incidents of going missing involving one young person, which had reduced dramatically, had begun to spike in both the frequency of incidents as well as the length of time that the young person was away from the home, with one incident being over four days. Known addresses, although searched by staff, were not included within the	

home's location assessment to ensure that all the risks were captured.

The young people are well safeguarded by appropriate supervision and support. Staff and managers have built effective partnerships with placing authorities, the designated safeguarding officer and the police, which promote effective safeguarding. The manager has a strong safeguarding ethos. Safeguarding systems are robust and include effective consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff vetting procedures, on occasion, fall below the standard that is best practice. There is no evidence that dates are fully scrutinised in processes, such as interviews, to identify and explore potential employment gaps or concerns. Furthermore, no record is maintained of the evaluation of interviews when notes show deficits in areas such as safeguarding as well as equality and diversity. These shortfalls mean that information which potentially impacts on suitability may not be identified.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection visit. Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. The home is well managed and there are effective internal systems in place to monitor the quality of service. The manager has very good knowledge of each of the young people's needs and individual progress and is committed to supporting them to succeed. This translates into clear stories of the young people's journeys and experiences of the home throughout evaluative reflection.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation. It offers therapeutic residential care for young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/01/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- As set out in Regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, ensure that all potential gaps in employment are identified and explored for each applicant and ensure that interview decisions are quantified ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1).
- Review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 15.1).

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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