

SC062931

Registered provider: Channels & Choices Kent LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to four children aged between eight and 17 years with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 27 October 2020.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 26 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2019	Full	Good
06/03/2019	Full	Good
05/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from positive relationships with the staff. As a result, children feel safe, well cared for and enjoy spending time with the attentive staff team. For example, one child said, 'The staff really help me and I like spending time with them.' Staff provide meaningful opportunities for the children to have normal childhood experiences that build their confidence. Examples of these opportunities include joining local sports clubs and swimming lessons.

When children move into the home, they do so in a careful and planned way. Staff fully consider the needs of the children already in the home. This includes visits to the home and giving the child a teddy that supports them through the moving process. Any potential issues are highlighted and staff are given guidance regarding the strategies they may need to help them to support the children. Therefore, children experience careful and effective care planning.

Care planning for the children is well thought-out and clearly recorded. Contributions from the organisation's therapy team, education providers and other involved professionals keep these plans relevant to the unique needs of each child. These plans demonstrate the child's journey and measures the children's progress. This 'stepping stone' approach provides individualised care and gives children the confidence to work hard to achieve goals which are important to them.

Carefully considered action is usually given towards the use of any measures that may be restrictive of, or that impinge on, the children's need for privacy and supervision. However, one example of door alarms, which are an agreed method for night-time use, have been inappropriately used for one child during the day. Once raised by the inspector, this practice ceased immediately.

All the children attend the in-house school. Staff promote the value of education and learning. They work alongside the school to develop tailored plans for all the children, this sometimes includes direct support in school. The school staff told the inspector that 'staff really understand the children's needs and are really supportive to the school.' Therefore, children's experiences of learning and education are positive and they make good progress.

Children benefit from being part of a close-knit, supportive community. Regular house meetings ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to express their feelings and have some input into the running of the home. These are effective forums for group discussions.

Children are supported to spend time with their families. Staff provide children with plans and calendars so they know when they will see family members. Social workers spoke highly of the practical and emotional support provided by staff to promote children spending time with people who are important to them.

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

Children say that they feel safe. They like the staff and the care that they receive. Staff demonstrate good safeguarding practice by following clear procedures when incidents occur. Their consultation with professional agencies is effective and positive for the children.

The staff provide good behaviour support for the children, who are helped to understand their own behaviours through detailed debriefs. This practice allows opportunities for learning and to build behaviour strategies. Consequently, children are developing resilience and coping processes to better deal with feelings of conflict or difficulty.

Children benefit from the calm and measured approach of staff. This helps children to reflect on challenges and frustrations and to develop more positive strategies to manage these. Staff are positive role models for the children, who experience a culture of respect and tolerance. This underpins an embedded expectation that there are positive ways to resolve differences and frustrations while respecting others.

The manager monitors the use of physical interventions. He talks to the staff and children after incidents and evaluates and analyses their responses. Any changes in interventions or strategies are added to children's risk assessments and records. The priority is to understand the children's behaviour and develop strategies. Therefore, children are cared for by staff who understand their needs and provide safe, informed care.

When there have been vacant posts, managers have filled rota gaps with staff who know the children well. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults, and people who are unfamiliar to the children, working there.

The physical environment of the home is well maintained. The children have spacious bedrooms that are individualised to their tastes and interests. Routine servicing of equipment ensures that the premises are safe. However, fire doors are being propped open. This undermines the fire safety of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager provides calm, insightful and reflective leadership. His high aspirations are shared by the staff. The child-focused approach and therapeutic ethos is understood throughout the team. While the staff team has experienced significant changes in structure, this has been skilfully managed and has not had an impact on the quality of care provided to the children.

Recruitment is of a good standard and all the necessary checks are undertaken to ensure that the adults working with the children have the necessary skills and experience to care for them. The staff speak positively about the training and

induction they receive. They are encouraged to evaluate how it equips them to work with the children in their care. Subsequently, children receive care from well-informed staff.

Staff state they are well supported and benefit from regular team meetings and reflection space. However, there are shortfalls in the regularity of supervision. This omission does not give staff the opportunity to reflect on practice and benefit from continuous professional development.

Regular communication with the children's social workers results in a shared approach to managing risks and targeted care planning for the children. Feedback from external professionals was very positive about communication and partnership working. One social worker stated, 'they work hard to progress the children' while another stated 'they clearly have the children's best interest in everything they do'. This demonstrates a culture of openness which ensures that children benefit from meaningful joint working.

Leaders and managers have a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is a comprehensive service development plan in place to further improve the service. Managers demonstrate a commitment to ensuring continuous improvement to address the shortfalls that they have identified.

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, 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 child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the register person should ensure that staff understand the appropriate use of door alarms on children's bedrooms.	31 May 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure staff receive regular supervision in line with the organisations policy.	31 May 2022
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25(2)(b))	31 May 2022

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: SC062931

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Channels & Choices Kent LLP

Registered provider address: 44 The Pantiles, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN2 5TN

Responsible individual: Kate Stephenson

Registered manager: Gary Carmichael

Inspector

Rebecca Fisher, Social Care Inspector

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