

SC067895

Registered provider: Channels and Choices Kent LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection and one child had recently moved on.

The home is run by a private organisation that operates several registered children's homes.

There is no registered manager for the home. However, a new manager is in post, and they have applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 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: 12 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/04/2023	Full	Outstanding
26/04/2022	Full	Outstanding
25/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
17/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children express that they are happy living in the home and enjoy participating in activities they like. Staff are attuned to the children's needs. They ensure that appropriate boundaries and support are in place. When children become upset, staff offer sensitive emotional support. The positive relationships the staff have developed with the children help the children flourish and make progress. One professional said that their child 'is happy, well cared for and making positive progress', and said, 'I appreciate the staff's dedication and professionalism.'

Staff empower children to find their voices. They encourage children to express their views, wishes and feelings and ensure plenty of opportunities for them to do so. Children feel listened to, valued and respected. If something cannot be achieved, staff explain the reasons to them.

The organisation's 'Stepping Stones' programme includes specific steps and targets. This helps staff monitor each child's progress towards their goals, including any planned moves to a family home environment. This programme helps staff ensure that children are well prepared for their future moves, allowing them to move at their own pace. When supporting children to move on from the home, staff recognise the importance of advanced planning. This includes careful and creative consideration around the practical and emotional elements needed to assist the children who remain in the home, and the child moving on, to manage change.

Staff talk fondly and positively about the children. They are proud of the progress that each child is making. The children feel that the staff care about them and want the best for them. One family member said that their child 'thinks the world of all the staff and thinks of them as family'.

Staff recognise the significance of family relationships. They help children maintain contact with important people in their lives. They encourage children to spend time with family members and are creative in organising these opportunities. Children have received support from staff in rebuilding relationships with family and exploring connections with their broader family networks, regardless of the distance involved. One family member said staff are 'incredibly supportive and travel long distances to bring [name of child] to visits'.

Staff value and promote the importance of education. Children have made strong progress in attending school and in their academic achievements. One child, who was not engaging, now enjoys learning and attending school full time.

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

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and their responsibilities to keep them safe. When concerns arise, staff take appropriate action to ensure that children get the support they need to stay safe. Staff are not risk-averse and understand that taking well-managed risks is essential to children's development. They balance well the need to keep children safe with allowing children age-appropriate freedoms and responsibilities, such as independent time out in the community and attending clubs with peers.

Through consultation with the in-house therapeutic team, staff consider the effect of adverse experiences on children. As a result, staff are better equipped to understand and respond to children's presenting behaviour. Staff are creative in their approach and engage with the child in the way that best suits them. One professional said, 'I am particularly happy about their reflective key-work sessions, which help children to think through their actions and change their behaviours.'

The manager ensures that children's concerns or allegations are thoroughly investigated and managed appropriately. Information is promptly shared with relevant partner agencies, including the local authority designated officer for safeguarding. When there are areas of concern, management proactively implements appropriate support and training needs. Children who raise any concerns are well supported. Staff have conversations with the child to help them understand the outcome of their concerns. Restorative work takes place to rebuild the adult-child relationship as appropriate.

Door sensors are used in children's bedrooms at night, and managers and the placing authority regularly review their necessity. Children are consulted about the use of the sensors and understand their purpose.

Staff use de-escalation skills to manage tricky situations. Physical restraint is used as a last resort. Staff clearly document instances when restraint is used. Following incidents, staff and children have planned conversations to discuss what occurred and why. This helps identify proactive measures to improve future incident management. However, the restraint records do not always clearly detail the actions staff take to support children before, during and after the restraint. As a result, the registered person cannot always promptly review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practices or address any issues or emerging trends of concern.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the home has experienced changes in management and staffing. This has created some instability for both the children and the staff. During this transition, the responsible individual has ensured effective oversight and consistency. A new manager has been in place since November 2024 and has applied to register with Ofsted.

The manager is aware of the children's individual needs and is clear on the home's strengths and areas for development. He has plans in place to develop the team and the service further. The manager acts on recommended actions from the monthly independent person's visit. He uses the feedback to further enhance the quality of care provided to children.

The staff team now has good morale and enthusiasm. Staff said they feel well supported by the manager and responsible individual, who they described as knowledgeable, experienced and approachable. One staff member said, 'The manager has brought leadership and a structured approach, alongside refurbishments that give the home a brighter feel.'

Supervision arrangements ensure that staff have a formal space for professional development and reflection. The staff team has regular meetings to discuss ideas about service development. Staff benefit from good training opportunities. They are provided with specialist learning opportunities specific to the needs of the children.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for all the children and are inspiring the same culture in the staff team. They maintain high expectations for staff to ensure that a child-focused approach is embedded in staff practice and drive positive change to improve children's lives. They express pride in each child's achievements. Leaders genuinely care about the well-being of children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff clearly record the actions they take to support children when physical intervention is used. Records should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: SC067895

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Channels and Choices Kent LLP

Registered provider address: Galloways Accounting, 15 West Street, Brighton
BN1 2RE

Responsible individual: Kate Stephenson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sharron Dormand, Social Care Inspector

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