

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 and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation. It offers therapeutic residential care.

The home has not had a registered manager since February 2019.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 July 2019

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: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: A compliance notice was issued under regulation 21 following the full inspection in February 2019. This notice was deemed to be met following a monitoring visit in April 2019.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2019	Full	Inadequate
31/10/2017	Full	Good
27/09/2016	Full	Good
08/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- [Personalised care is] Care which meets each child's needs and promotes their welfare, taking into account of the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)

In particular, ensure that children's plans take account of their heritage and cultural needs.

- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

In particular, ensure that the home is maintained to meet the needs of the children, and that the planned refurbishment is completed within reasonable time scales. Also, ensure the representation of black and minority children within the home environment. For example, diverse books, pictures and media resources should be made accessible and on view.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection in February 2019, significant progress has been made. The manager and leaders have taken rapid and resolute action to address identified shortfalls. The changes have had a positive impact on the quality of care. While there has been a lot of backroom work, the adults have worked well to limit and manage the changes, with minimal impact on the children.

One child told the inspector, 'It's just like living in a family here.' Adults are caring and nurturing in their approach with the children. They encourage each child to achieve their best within their capabilities. These positive relationships promote the children's well-being and sense of security.

The home is part of a wider organisation, which has an in-house therapy team. Children engage in therapy and are developing positive skills with which to better understand their anxieties and emotions. They are exploring their life stories and the impact these have had on them in a safe and supportive environment.

Adults encourage and motivate the children to follow their interests, whatever they may be. This includes supporting one child to travel on public transport. Children have access to a range of activities in the community. As a result, the children develop their social skills and gain greater confidence.

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

Children appear happy and settled in the home. They seek support and guidance from the adults when they are worried or need help. One child said, 'They pick it up, even if it's a little thing.' Adults are aware that these trusted relationships are crucial in helping the children to move forward.

Adults support the children to explore ways to manage their emotions and to develop strategies to enable them to work through challenges. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and contain individualised information regarding the risks and vulnerabilities for each child. They set out clear guidance for the adults to reduce and manage risks for the children.

The use of physical interventions has reduced since the last inspection. When an intervention is applied, it is in the least restrictive form and for the shortest timescale possible. The manager reviews and encourages reflection after each incident with the adults and children involved. This helps to ensure a focus on any new learning and an exploration of their views and feelings about the incident. In addition to the manager's oversight, the organisation's physical intervention trainer audits all incidents on a monthly basis. This provides an extra level of scrutiny to ensure safe and proportionate practice.

The voice of the children is evident in the home. Children are vocal, make choices and contribute to key decisions. They are involved in choosing furnishings, selecting activities and menu planning. Children help with basic daily chores in the home, and this helps them to learn responsibility and self-reliance.

The location of the home is in a predominantly White British area, and staff do not reflect the children's ethnicity. On one child's case record front sheet, cultural needs information was left blank and did not contain the name she prefers to be called by. This was rectified during the inspection. Lack of information on culture and heritage undermines the adult's ability to ensure that the children develop a positive sense of their identities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The previous registered manager resigned in February 2019. This resulted in the responsible person taking on the day-to-day management of the home. The manager has volunteered the home for an additional audit visit during the summer, which will be undertaken by a group of care leavers. This is a good example of the manager and leader's commitment to raise standards and to gain a perspective from care-experienced young people.

The manager and leaders are developing a reflective culture in which learning is encouraged. Adults reflect daily on what has gone well and what could be improved. Adults reported feeling well led and having clarity about what they are aspiring to achieve as a team. The manager utilises a wide variety of systems and processes to assess and evaluate the quality of care in the home to ensure that standards are met.

The home is in the process of being refurbished. The basement area is currently out of use. Due to the layout of the home, there is limited space in the downstairs living area for children to have space and quiet time away from each other. However, imminent plans to refurbish the basement and equip it as a sensory room are in place. This will be a positive addition to the home and further enhance the children's day-to-day living experience.

The manager has a good knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. However, in the home there are no obvious signs of the representation of black and minority children. The manager has plans in place to ensure that positive images of role models, art, media and books will be accessible and on view, by the completion of the home's refurbishment. The manager and the team recognise that this will help to shape all the children's experiences and build on their knowledge of the world around them.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Camburgh House, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3DN

Responsible individual: Lisa Speight

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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