

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: 26 to 27 February 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

The home has been subject to two compliance notices issued in relation to the protection of children standard and the behaviour management and discipline standard.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2016	Full	Good
08/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/12/2015	Full	Good
11/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(2)(a)(b)(vii)(c)(i)(ii))	07/04/2019
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(c)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(v))	07/04/2019
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	07/04/2019

registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1)[(2)(a)*](i)(ii)(iii)[(v)(vi)(vii)*](b)(e))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; use the monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(a)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	07/04/2019
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in	07/04/2019

relation to any child. *(Regulation 19(1))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	07/04/2019
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained– the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"). The relevant date is– in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(4)(a)(5)(a)(b))	07/04/2019
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether– children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	07/04/2019
The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home; any change in the identity of the responsible individual. (Regulation 49(1)(a)(e)(iii))	07/04/2019

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children living at this home are not protected from harm. They have not always felt safe and listened to by staff, and this has had a negative impact on their ability to build trust. This is compounded further by children experiencing multiple care givers who are inexperienced. High staff turnover adversely affects the quality and consistency of care. Children feel insecure and have not been able to make secure attachments with care givers.

Care plans focus on the delivery of therapeutic care. However, they do not include day-to-day arrangements, such as daily routines, interests and activities, or the wishes and feelings and arrangements for children to see their family and friends. As a result, planning to respond to the individual needs of the children has been poor.

Leaders and managers report that children have made progress. However, no tangible evidence was provided to support these statements. Records sampled did not demonstrate effective care planning or evidence the progress, and targets had not been set. Therapeutic thinking time informs key-work plans, however this does not translate into meaningful goals for the children. There is a significant gap between the therapeutic model and the knowledge and skill set of staff. Staff did not demonstrate their intrinsic knowledge of the children or that they were attuned to their needs. This is a missed opportunity for the children to receive the level of care described in the home's Statement of Purpose.

Children's basic health needs are met, such as dental and other health appointments. However, there is no record of general practitioner approval for children to receive home remedies. Staff could not provide evidence of stock control and monitoring processes. Consequently, there are no safe arrangements for the administration or stock control of home remedies.

House meetings are held daily. They provide a space for children to express their views and feelings. However, records of these meetings do not evidence that they are used to support the therapeutic process or provide opportunities for emotional development.

Leaders and managers have agreed that the home environment is worn and needs updating. They have identified areas for the development of the home. This has involved some consultation with the children. However, a tour of the premises highlighted a broken chair and bed in the garden, and the children's playroom was dark and chaotic. A loft hatch in a child's bathroom was unlocked. Overall, there is a lack of safe and welcoming spaces for children.

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

Risk assessments are weak. They do not cover known risks or provide sufficient detail about triggers and early warning signs. Staff are not inquisitive in the way that they explore and learn from incidents. As a result, new strategies are not identified, and children are not helped to understand their behaviour or develop skills to self-regulate their feelings and responses.

Children do not receive individualised care to meet their specific behavioural needs. This has led to behaviour management techniques being used that are unsuited to a child's specific needs. It took staff several months to identify that one child, who was being frequently restrained, required space to calm. Another child's evening routine was starting too early, causing significant incidents. The lack of analysis and overview of behaviour and incidents is a missed opportunity for the staff to reflect and to adapt the care provided to the children.

Some comments made by staff are inappropriate and demonstrate a lack of awareness and understanding of children's behaviour. Examples that inspectors found included staff asking a child to 'calm down' in a situation where this was unhelpful. There was no clear evidence in their plans of expectations about children's behaviour. As a result, children are unclear of staff's expectations, and staff behaviour to children demonstrates a lack of understanding or respect.

Some staff have threatened to use physical intervention when children have displayed challenging behaviours. The number and duration of restraints are prolonged. The records sampled included durations ranging from five to 65 minutes. Leaders and managers have failed to scrutinise records or challenge this practice.

Allegations have not been consistently reported. On one occasion, an allegation that was made during a physical intervention was not reported to the designated officer for five days. Staff have not followed the organisation's own safeguarding policy and procedures. This is indicative of staff's failure to understand their individual responsibility in reporting serious safeguarding concerns.

Safer recruitment practices are weak. Managers have not interrogated gaps in employment within applications forms. Serious omissions were found in obtaining and verifying references, including not taking up the most recent employer's and overseas references. Recruitment processes are not rigorous and do not provide sufficient detail regarding the scoring and selection of staff. Recruitment processes fall short of undertaking safe and rigorous checks to promote the safe care of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have not been effective. There has been a period of instability during which staff turnover was high, including among senior staff. Supervision of some staff has been irregular and has failed to address the serious concerns over practice that have been revealed through the inspection process.

The previous manager notified Ofsted of his voluntary cancellation of registration with Ofsted. However, senior managers failed to notify Ofsted of the interim management arrangements at the home. The Statement of Purpose was updated during the inspection to name the interim manager.

Recruitment has been ineffective, and the records sampled were weak. As a result, poor recruitment has directly impacted on the children, who have experienced poor-quality care from multiple inexperienced staff.

Staff training is inadequate. Significant gaps and omissions include staff who have not achieved a level 3 qualification within the regulatory timeframe. The number of staff who have been trained in first aid, fire and medication is insufficient.

Monitoring by managers is unsatisfactory. Managers have not identified the serious and widespread failures in the day-to-day running of this home. The independent reports have also failed to provide a rigorous assessment of the home and its events. Leaders and managers have not shown the necessary drive in monitoring and developing the service. The home is not currently delivering the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose.

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 difference 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

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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