

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>             | <b>27/09/2016</b>                                        |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | <b>SC067895</b>                                          |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>          | <b>Full</b>                                              |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>           | <b>Children's home</b>                                   |
| <b>Registered provider</b>         | <b>Channels and Choices Kent LLP</b>                     |
| <b>Registered provider address</b> | <b>31 St Georges Place,<br/>Canterbury, Kent CT1 1XD</b> |

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Martin Scholfield</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Katie Smissen</b>     |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Helen Lee</b>         |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>27/09/2016</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Improved effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                   |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                               |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                   |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                               |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                   |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                   |

**SC067895**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people have achieved significant and sustained improvement in all areas of their development while living at the home, including education, health and emotional well-being.
- Young people are able to develop attachments. Staff listen to young people and do all that they can to accommodate young people's requests. Young people report 'it's good here', 'a solid 9 out of 10' and 'thumbs up', and do not wish to change anything about their home. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, who keep asking questions and showing a genuine interest, enabling them to reflect upon their history and identify ways in which they can move forward.
- The staff are secure in their understanding of each young person's needs, as well as potential anxiety triggers. Staff work hard to consider and address young people's presenting and underlying needs. Young people do not go missing from this home.
- All young people are in education and making excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Staff work well with education professionals to support young people who find going to school difficult.
- Placement planning has improved, and links to the strategies which in-house therapists devise. Key-working preparation has improved.
- The manager has excellent knowledge of the young people and is able to identify their progress in detail and understand their needs. One social worker stated 'how child focused (the organisation) and the staff working directly with my young person are... I have noticed a huge difference in (young person's name) since coming into their care, and in particular over the last couple of months.'

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Ensure that, within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—<br>(i) the name of the child;<br>(ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;<br>(iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure;<br>(iv) a description of the measure and its duration;<br>(v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;<br>(vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)) | 28/12/2016 |

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Safely maintain the home's domestic appliances so that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, replace unsafe fridge freezer drawers.

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, review the training needs of the independent visitor.

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

#### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 08/03/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 21/12/2015      | Full            | Good                    |
| 11/03/2015      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 07/01/2015      | Full            | Good                    |

## Inspection judgements

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people enjoy a warm and welcoming home which is personalised and child centred. An established, qualified and committed core staff team provides the young people with consistent parenting and the support to make significant progress in all areas of their development.</p> <p>Staff closely supervise children, engaging them in meaningful dialogue and activities, protecting them and promoting their welfare. Staff place the well-being of young people at the centre of practice and make decisions in their best interests. Young people are clear about how to make a complaint, but have not felt the need to do so.</p> <p>All young people are in education. Staff work with their education colleagues to help young people to make the daily transition to school. Staff members make excellent links to the young people's school which have been improved by daily phone calls and individual handovers from the teachers. Staff successfully diffuse potential incidents linked to school. Young people take pride in their school responsibilities, such as being leader of the school council or being a prefect. Staff ensure that they are available to spend one-to-one time with the young people upon their return from school. Young people make good progress from their starting points and some have secured qualifications in maths and English. One young person spoke of 'using my learning to become a paramedic'. They have clear aspirations for their futures.</p> <p>Staff invest time with young people. Young people access social and recreational opportunities inside and outside of the home. Staff actively support the young people to develop their interests. The young people make decisions about which activities they would like to try. They attend clubs in the community, such as a local church youth club, swimming at the local pool, St Johns Ambulance and theatre groups, according to their particular interests. This fosters their sense of belonging in the local community. Young people develop their confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Young people have a strong voice within the home. Daily meetings allow them to express their views on day-to-day matters. More formal, individual consultation takes place prior to their looked after children reviews and as part of the registered manager's review of the quality of care. The young people also have regular key-work sessions. The young people feel listened to and valued.</p> <p>Staff focus on supporting young people to acquire independence and daily living</p> |                 |

skills as they mature, in preparation for adult life. In addition to practical skills, staff support young people to develop emotional resilience to cope with their difficulties and to take responsibility for themselves, as they face the realities of the adult world.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Through close supervision by thoughtful and consistent staff, children develop a sense of safety, protection and trust in the adults who care for them. A young person reported, 'I feel safe here.'</p> <p>The home has effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and utilises LSCB training. Staff have a good understanding of the young people's safety. One risk assessment was not up to date. Staff are aware of the risks of sexual exploitation. Young people do not have unsupervised access to the internet.</p> <p>The home provides a safe environment where young people settle. Young people do not go missing from this home. Procedures are in place to ensure that staff would take appropriate action to protect the young person and ensure their safe return if such an event occurs.</p> <p>Staff have good knowledge of the impact of neglect and abuse, and they are able to link this effectively to young people's behaviour. Staff regularly address the underlying causes of behaviour with a psychologist and use this knowledge in care planning. Staff demonstrate an understanding of what is currently going on in the life of their key young person and take appropriate action. This may include conferring with health professionals. The staff team, therapists and managers regularly review support for young people to reduce their levels of anxiety. One independent reviewing officer commented, 'The staff have provided children with a great deal of support and they have engaged well with the therapy provided.'</p> <p>Clear behaviour guidelines are in place, and these include known triggers and intervention strategies that staff follow. Incidents that require physical intervention are infrequent. Where they do occur, good recording and monitoring is in place. Although restraints are not reducing for all the young people, the home is clear that the individual increases are due to external influences. These spikes are clearly identified and understood by the management and staff.</p> <p>Young people feel fairly treated. However, the records do not easily allow an audit trail of sanctions or staff's practice of giving out early bedtimes. There has not been any formal police intervention at the home for these young people.</p> <p>Young people's safety is enhanced by the secure recruitment procedures in place, which ensure that all staff are vetted prior to commencing work at the home.</p> |                 |

However, on one file, voluntary work references had not been verified.

Fire drills take place at regular intervals. Health and safety checks are up to date, but the fridge freezer had sharp, broken plastic drawers and a build-up of frost. A recommendation addresses this issue.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The registered manager has been in post here since July 2015 and has the level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care and children and young people's services. She is registered with Ofsted. She is a strong leader who has implemented processes to ensure that improvements in care planning reflect the progress of the young people. She is supported by a deputy manager. Staff said, 'there is always someone to talk to', 'I get a lot from the reflection time at the end of the shift' and 'I enjoy working here and the management is a strength'. This indicates that management support is effective.</p> <p>The manager is aware of the strengths and skills of each staff member and uses this knowledge to provide the most appropriated support for young people. She actively makes decisions about which staff member can best meet a young person's needs, for example to give emotional support when a child is distressed or to motivate an activity. However, formal supervision for staff is inconsistent and not in line with the home's policy. One new member of staff had only had one group supervision since starting over a month ago. This does not demonstrate effective and consistent performance management of staff to maintain safe practices within the home.</p> <p>Staffing levels are appropriate to meet the needs of children living at the home, ensuring that they are closely supervised, protected and supported to manage their emotional difficulties. Fully trained staff meet the needs of the children and young people whom they work with. Specialised training to meet individual children's complex needs is in place. Staff know and understand the children and young people in their care, and are equipped to meet their specific needs.</p> <p>The registered manager actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided. She has a thorough understanding of activity within the home, the children and young people who use the service, and staff performance. Monitoring reports are extremely detailed and comprehensive. An independent visitor comes to the home regularly. She submits a report to the relevant authorities, including Ofsted. These do not always give her professional evaluation of how the conduct of staff is promoting the young people's well-being, for example the improved key working. This is a missed opportunity for the home to receive independent scrutiny.</p> |                 |

Staff regularly review detailed care plans. These plans remain live documents which inform staff about changes to young people's needs and promote a consistent approach to their care. In addition, separate key-worker action plans are meticulously linked to the care planning process. These plans provide in-depth identification of children's needs and guidance for staff, and they are followed in practice.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **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 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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