

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 three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation. It offers therapeutic residential care.

Inspection dates: 31 October to 1 November 2017

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

How well children and children 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: 27 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The children are making progress, having new experiences, and growing in confidence and self-esteem.
- Relationships between the children and the staff are strong. The children feel cared for by staff who are nurturing and attentive, providing children with a secure base.

- Close working between the home and school promotes a culture of learning that encourages the children to work hard in school.
- The children are kept safe by vigilant staff who are committed to effective safeguarding.
- Careful planning enables the children to prepare for independence at their own pace. Plans are flexible, to adapt to the children's changing needs.
- Leaders and managers work cohesively with the staff team to achieve positive outcomes for the children.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Monitoring by managers is not effective in highlighting areas for improvement.
- Risk assessments do not reliably inform the staff of known risks, or strategies to reduce them.
- Induction for new staff is not recorded or effectively monitored by the registered manager.

Records, including those of key work sessions and children's meetings, do not consistently record the children's input.

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 leadership and management standard requires the registered person use the monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(h))	22/01/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Provide staff with the necessary support as outlined in staff induction programmes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.8)
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and children: good

Children benefit from strong relationships with staff who are adept at delivering therapeutic care. The staff are attuned to the children's needs and promote their best interests.

Daily meetings provide opportunities for the children to engage in decision-making, and to reflect on the day's events, with support from the staff. However, records of these meetings do not consistently record the children's input. This does not provide a factual account of the meeting, which impacts on effective monitoring.

The children attend the organisation's school. Enthusiastic staff encourage children to attend. Communication between the home and school is frequent and comprehensive. This provides the children with consistent and predictable care between the home and education settings.

Each child's needs are assessed by the organisation's clinical psychologist. Comprehensive care plans are drawn up that incorporate a therapeutic approach and provide staff with a framework for their work with the children. Key-worker action plans are used effectively, to guide the staff to enable the children to achieve goals that support their development and progress.

When the care plan is for children to move on to foster care, careful care planning, including spending time with the organisation's foster carers, has been effective in helping children safely work through some complex and challenging feelings.

Admissions to the home are carefully considered. Impact risk assessments provide a detailed record of the potential risks, and strategies to reduce them. Equally, when the children are moving on, plans are detailed yet flexible to ensure that they meet their individual needs. A foster carer for one child said, 'The plans for moving on are really good. The home supported both me and [name of child] during this time and still offer outreach now, which really helped us both feel supported.'

The staff make use of imaginative play to help the children learn how to manage their differences. There is a shared understanding of the rules and boundaries, which are applied consistently by well-informed staff. As a result, clear expectations of behaviour are widely understood by the children.

The home has undergone some redecoration. The children have been involved in choosing the decor. However, as one child felt that too much was changing, some areas, for example the hallways, have been redecorated in the same colours. This is a good example of the staff responding to the children's wishes.

The children are encouraged by the staff to try new experiences. For some, local clubs are increasing their social skills. An independent reviewing officer said, 'I was really worried for him socially. He used to go to a club once, then refuse. Now he is regularly going to community events. The staff have responded to him really well, giving him a broader experience and helping him make community links.' For others, new experiences including horse riding, and roller skating, are helping them grow in self-esteem. The staff encourage learning through play, figures, dressing-up clothes and other appropriate games and toys, which are abundant. Consequently, the children are learning and growing through a range of interesting and fulfilling experiences.

The staff have high aspirations for the children. They encourage them to do their best. One child said, 'I like the rules here as I feel safe, staff help you learn them.' The staff make sure that the children know that they are holding them in mind. An example of this is a staff member taking a toy penguin on holiday and sending photos back to the children. They make a special effort to help the children celebrate their birthdays. One young person said, 'It's my birthday soon. I know it will be great. I'm going shopping, and on a driving experience, and staff are making me a cake.'

The children benefit from regularly spending time with important people in their lives. Some have friends who they see regularly. Others spend time with family members. The staff are sensitive to the need for the children to maintain their identity through such meetings. They seek creative ways to facilitate community-based activities to support this. As a result, the children are able to spend time with key figures in a safe, supported way.

How well children and children are helped and protected: good

Staff are effective at safeguarding the children. They know what to report, to whom and when. The home has a positive working relationship with the designated officer; for example, consulting with them when a young person made a complaint regarding a physical intervention. As a result of this, the young person knew that his concerns had been taken seriously.

The staff make good use of therapeutic thinking time to reflect and analyse the behaviour of the children, and their own practice. They go to great lengths to identify triggers, consider behaviours and analyse their own practice to inform the smooth running of the home. The registered manager also seeks feedback from the children. Recent feedback demonstrated that the children feel safe at the home and all had trusted adults to whom they can talk.

Since the last inspection, the number of physical interventions has increased. Managers used therapeutic thinking time to reflect on the reasons for the increase. This led to the planned move of one child from the home.

On occasion, the home has offered short-term placements to known children who have experienced challenges in their foster placements. Such placements have been carefully planned and have been effective, resulting in the children being able to return to their foster placements.

Risk assessments for the children contain some clear information. However, some key points from referral information and impact assessments are not included. As a result of this, the risk assessment does not reliably inform staff of all the known risks, or provide strategies to reduce them. This has not resulted in any harm coming to the children.

In order to reduce social media risks, the children have undertaken a course on online safety and are confident in reporting any worries to the staff. Missing episodes from the home are rare. When they do occur, staff respond quickly, following clear missing from

home procedures. Partnership working with specialist agencies, for example the police and multi-agency teams, is good. A shared understanding of the children's needs ensures that all the agencies work together effectively to keep the children safe.

New staff have joined the team. The safer recruitment checks have assisted leaders and managers in assessing new staff members' suitability for the role. New starters work with the core staff during their initial four weeks to provide them with shadowing opportunities. Induction for new staff follows a clear structure. However, records of induction and initial supervisions are not consistently completed. As a result, the induction of new staff is not meeting the organisation's own guidance.

The physical environment of the home is safe. All required health and safety checks and procedures are up to date, including the routine servicing of equipment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since December 2016. He has registered with Ofsted and is suitably experienced and qualified. He is currently undertaking the level 5 diploma. He identified strengths and weaknesses in the team, resulting in some changes to staff roles. He is developing the team's skills through mentoring and supervision. One staff member said, 'We are managed but he also listens to us, which makes us feel good.'

Since the last inspection, a review of the Regulation 44 monitoring has taken place and a new reporting format has been developed. This has improved the quality of the reports. The registered manager makes good use of the feedback from the independent visitor to make improvements at the home. The registered manager's monitoring does not consistently highlight areas for improvement, or identify shortfalls in the quality of records such as key-work records. Samples of these varied in quality, with some not recording children's views.

Following the last inspection, behaviour management has been a focus for the registered manager and his team. The staff team members have worked together to analyse interventions, adapt to individual needs and agree behaviour management strategies. A behaviour management guide is now in place that provides clear information to the staff. As a result, the staff are implementing consistent strategies to manage behaviour. Consequently, behaviour has improved. In response to the previous requirement, leaders and managers have reviewed the location risk assessment. It now provides comprehensive information about the local area and strategies to reduce risks.

Staff members' mandatory training is up to date. Staff also receive training in specialist areas, including radicalisation, confidentiality and child sexual exploitation. Policies relating to radicalisation and whistleblowing have been updated and provide the staff with clear descriptors and guidance on the steps that they need to take should these concerns arise. Almost all of the staff hold the level 3 diploma, or an equivalent qualification. Consequently, the staff have the skills and knowledge required to keep the children safe.

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, Kent CT1 3DN

Responsible individual: Martin Scholfield

Registered manager: Simon George

Inspector:

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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