

SC368637

Registered provider: Channels & 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 aged between seven and 16 on admission. The home is operated by a private organisation. According to the statement of purpose, the home caters for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 1 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/07/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2019	Full	Good
07/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
06/12/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children experience high-quality care that meets their individual needs. They have regular focused time with staff where they take part in activities that help to develop their confidence and sense of self. As a result, children make excellent progress in their general well-being.

Staff know the children well and promote their health needs effectively. Staff support children to attend health appointments and confidently advocate for them while also encouraging the children to express their views and wishes.

The therapeutic ethos of the home means that children's emotional healthcare is at the forefront of staff's practice. The joint working between the home, school, in-house and external therapy supports the continued emotional growth of the children, and provides them with a safe space to learn about themselves and understand their responses and reactions.

Staff promote the importance of education. Children make excellent progress in school and their academic achievement is acknowledged within the home no matter how small. The regular communication between the home and school ensures that children's daily experiences are well known, and staff can respond effectively.

Staff understand the importance of children's voices being heard. As a result, children are provided with a range of opportunities to express their views and wishes, which helps them to feel respected and valued. Informal discussions are held around the dining table, which gives a family feel to the home. Children can share the positives of their day and share what they would like to improve on.

The strong ethos of building children's confidence and self-esteem and being involved in decisions that affect them means that all children are consistently given the opportunity to be involved in meetings about them. One professional said, '[Name of child] had been well prepared and had a long list of issues she wanted to raise that was important to her.'

Children have access to a range of activities that help them to develop their individual interests, including performing arts, horse riding, arts and crafts and gaming, while also experiencing shared activities that help them to consolidate positive and respectful friendships within the home.

Staff promote continued family relationships, and they support children to have time with family and those who are important to them. Staff understand complex family relationships and work positively with plans for children to meet with their family. One professional said that the home responded to their child's wishes for their time

with family to be supported by a female staff member and the professional was happy that this was accommodated.

Children experience positive beginnings and endings at this home. They are warmly received by the other children who live here, and this has included welcome cards and letters left on their bed. When children move on, they have leaving events and receive gifts from the home. This helps them to understand that moving on is a part of life and that it can happen in a positive way.

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

Clear and effective practice by staff in this home means that children are increasingly safe and opportunities for them to come to harm are limited.

Children have detailed and up-to-date risk assessments which are specific to their needs. The risk assessments are individualised and state clearly what the risks are and how they can be mitigated. Children are aware of their risk assessments and understand why they are in place. Children say that they feel safe.

Clear positive handling plans are in place, and all staff know how to work with each child. Incidents of physical intervention are closely reviewed and monitored by the manager and, where necessary, the physical intervention instructor. This enables effective oversight of these events to ensure the children's safety and well-being. The debriefs with staff and children promote learning. Children are given the opportunity to reflect and apologise for the behaviour that has led to the physical intervention.

Children have a strong sense of safety and well-being and rarely go missing from care. Clear and detailed risk assessments are in place for children who might go missing and staff follow these assessments closely. During the last missing-from-care incident, staff worked together to keep the child in sight and ensure the child's safety. Joined-up working between a range of professionals and family helped to reinforce to the child the dangers of leaving the home without permission and showed the child that they care.

Very detailed behaviour management plans are in place. Staff know them well and work closely with children to ensure that they are well supported. Consistent messages are given to children around their behaviour. For example, staff make clear their expectations regarding behaviour and manners at the table, which helps to reflect what would be expected in the wider society.

Clear safeguarding procedures are in place that meet the needs of children. Staff know these procedures and are confident in their implementation. Children's welfare is well promoted and constantly reviewed.

Good recruitment practices are in place. This ensures that only appropriately vetted individuals work at the home and provide care for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. The manager is suitably ambitious for what the children can achieve and ensures a high standard of individualised care.

Leaders and managers have clear ideas of how to improve the home, whether aesthetically to create a more homely environment or through the improvement of processes that progress, such as matching and risk assessments of the local area. Leaders and managers consistently review how improvements can be made and are clear about the strengths of the home.

The strong reflective and learning culture at the home enables staff to feel well supported and that their development is valued. Staff receive regular supervision that is reflective and there are several opportunities for staff to meet and have therapeutic thinking time. Staff training is tailored to meet the needs of individual children and to meet the staff's professional developmental needs. For example, a member of staff was supported to complete an extensive counselling course.

Leaders and managers have ensured that a solid process is in place to enable a clear understanding of the progress children are making. Progress is routinely monitored, and immediate action is taken where the responses from other services are not effective. For example, the manager rigorously challenged a placing authority when there was a delay in the provision of a school place for a child.

Professional relationships are strong and effective. Leaders and managers communicate with a wide range of professionals to ensure the best possible care and experiences for children. For example, a community nurse has been approached to speak with the children about health and the importance of healthy eating. Positive relationships within the local area mean that children who live at the home become part of the community. They are involved in local activities, and the giving of seasonal gifts is reciprocated.

Leaders and managers take effective steps to ensure that diversity is promoted within the home. A range of activities helps to keep diversity at the forefront. Difference is celebrated. Culture evenings are popular with the children as well as discussions around the dining table, and an interactive information board is regularly updated by staff and children.

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: SC368637

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Channels & Choices Kent LLP

Registered provider address: 44 The Pantiles, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN2 5TN

Responsible individual: Kate Stephenson

Registered manager: Sharne Farley

Inspector

Vevene Muhammad: Social Care Inspector

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