

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC368637
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Channels and Choices Kent LLP
Registered person address	10 Clanwilliam Road Deal Kent CT14 7BX

Responsible individual	Martin Anthony Scholfield
Registered manager	Nicola Louvain Stewart
Date of last inspection	18/08/2014

Inspection date	14/10/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people benefit from their placement at this home. They make good progress and receive bespoke plans of care which encourage and nurture their growth and development. Positive warm relationships underpinned by consistent care enables the young people to develop trust in the adults caring for them.

Young people's views are seen as a central part of the running of the home. They are encouraged to voice their views and opinions in numerous forums. As a result of this they feel they can make choices in how the home is run, for example by being able to influence what activities they have.

At the last inspection in August the home was rated as inadequate. A particular issue identified at that inspection had a significant impact on the overall judgement. Since then, the managers and directors have reviewed the quality of the care provided and the systems in place to ensure young people's safety is protected. At this inspection these are found to be working effectively and young people have their safety promoted to a good standard. External professionals have confirmed good communication with the home about any issues and are satisfied with how the home has addressed them. All the shortfalls identified at the last inspection have now been addressed. In order to underpin this progress, the home has a number of quality assurance systems in place so that practice can be examined and records

maintained to a good standard. This is working well.

One recommendation has been made. This is in relation to the home having a written emergency evacuation plan in place in the home's fire risk assessment. This has had no impact on the safety of the young people as they know the procedure for fire drills and all have taken part in them, however, there is no written plan which evidences the procedure that they follow.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is run by a partnership company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/08/2014	Full	inadequate
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
13/11/2013	Full	adequate
18/02/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan and that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency. (This is in relation to having a written evacuation plan in the home's fire risk assessment so that the practical procedure can be evidenced in writing) (NMS 10.9)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are able to reflect on their backgrounds and histories as a result of the care and guidance which they receive. This enables them to develop good coping strategies and to make positive decisions about their lives and behaviours. They have individual targets in place to achieve and they examine and reflect upon their progress during key work sessions. Because of this good quality support they make good progress. One young person said, 'I have been here for at least two years, I've really learnt to control my temper much better.'

Young people benefit from having their health needs known and met to a good standard. This includes attendance at routine health appointments, such as dentists and opticians, as well as appointments with therapists.

Full time attendance at school is embedded into the regime and culture of the home. As a result of this, young people achieve excellent levels of attendance and make significant progress. In addition, they are also able to enjoy activities in the community, which include membership of clubs and having circles of friends outside of the home.

While none of the young people are preparing to live independently, the home provides them with opportunities to develop, independence skills at a level commensurate with their ability and confidence. This includes self-care skills, independent travel and budgeting and cooking. 'Cooking is part of my pathway plan, I cook once a week, it's quite good fun' said one young person.

Quality of care **good**

Relationships between the young people and members of staff are good. Interactions are warm, good humoured and supportive. As a result of this atmosphere and culture, young people are able to voice their views and opinions with confidence. This means that they have a voice in how the home is run. They are able to influence matters such as menus, activities and décor. There is a complaints process which is easily accessible and understood by the young people. Complaints made are addressed quickly and records show how they have been resolved and if the young person is satisfied with the outcome.

Individual care plans explain in detail what each young person's needs are and how these are to be met. The young people's needs, taking careful account of their cultural and religious backgrounds, are clearly outlined in the care plans. These plans are developed using input from ex-carers (where appropriate), social workers

and the young people themselves. This ensures that young people feel involved in their care. Care plans are reviewed on a regular basis by the acting manager, senior practitioner and other senior members of staff. This ensures that they are of good quality, up to date and relevant.

All young people's routine health needs and health appointments are identified and met. Additionally, young people are able to meet therapists regularly in order to promote their emotional well-being. Members of staff support young people in attending health appointments, especially if they find these anxiety provoking. For example, their patient nurturing approach has enabled young people to go to the dentist and improve their dental health. All the young people are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and to exercise routinely. As a result of this approach, young people benefit from living in a home where their emotional and physical health is actively promoted to a good standard.

The value of education is promoted to the young people. All are in full time education and have made significant progress at school especially when bearing in mind their starting points. Support given to the young people has enabled them to maintain their placements on a full time basis and has resulted in positive reports from schools, with regards to their academic progress.

Members of staff ensure that young people have a choice of activities available to them. They support them to attend clubs in the community and this helps the young people to develop their confidence and social skills. They are able to increase their circle of friends and to become active members of their local community. Examples of clubs which the young people attend include dancing, football and action figure collecting clubs.

The home is well maintained and comfortable. The young people are able to choose the décor in their rooms and this helps them to feel that they have an investment in where they live. Additionally, the young people are able to lock their rooms and have their own door keys, which promotes their privacy.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people report that they feel safe living at the home. Members of staff have a good working knowledge of how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and to whom they must report concerns. This includes knowledge of external agencies they can approach if they feel they need to 'whistle blow.'

Young people report that bullying does not occur in the home. Members of staff are aware of how to address this should there be a concern.

No young people have been missing from the home since the last inspection. There are clear individual protocols in place for each young person if they are absent

without permission and members of staff have detailed knowledge of each young people's vulnerabilities should they go missing.

All members of staff are trained in the method of physical restraint used in the home. If an incident of restraint does occur then the reasons for this are examined. Records of the restraint are thorough and include the young person's views. The acting manager reviews each incident and discusses it with the staff involved to see if there are learning and practice points to be gained. This ensures that practice is subject to scrutiny and young people's safety and rights are robustly protected.

Young people report that the rules of the house are clear and fair. They earn rewards for positive behaviour, such as extra outings and additional spending money. Sanctions administered are recorded and the young people's views also recorded. The effectiveness and appropriateness of the sanctions is reviewed by the acting manager. The monitoring systems within the home ensure that disciplinary measures are effectively monitored for fairness and effectiveness by senior members of staff and that members of staff are accountable for their practice. This promotes young people's rights and safety.

The organisation which runs the home has a robust recruitment process which ensures that only members of staff who have had background checks completed, such as the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks and positive references, are allowed to work in the home. This means that only adults with safe working histories and backgrounds work at the home.

The home has clear policies and procedures in place for the staff to follow in the event that they have concerns about young people's safety or well-being. These guidelines are aligned with local policies agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) reports that communication with the home is good and that any concerns are shared in a timely manner. Records of a recent incident are clear and show that liaison with both the LADO and placing social worker was prompt. This meant that the issue was reviewed and dealt with effectively.

The home has systems and checks in place which ensure that it is safely maintained. Fire drills and checks of safety equipment are carried out on a weekly basis. Fire drills have been undertaken by all young people and staff to ensure they know the process to evacuate the building in an emergency. While the fire risk assessment identifies hazards and how to address these, it does not include written procedures for evacuation. This has not had an impact on the safety of the home, but the shortfall means there is no written evidence to support the safe practice.

Leadership and management

good

At the time of this inspection the Registered Manager was on maternity leave. A new manager was appointed in July 2014 to cover the period of the maternity leave. His application to Ofsted has yet to be processed.

There are robust systems in place to ensure that practice within the home is scrutinised. This means that quality assurance monitoring of the home's performance and staff practice is good. Weekly meetings are held by a senior manager in the organisation and the acting manager to discuss and reflect upon how the home is performing. This is underpinned by reviews carried out by directors of the company every six weeks. In between there are monthly monitoring visits carried out by an independent visitor as required by Regulation 33. The young people's views are sought as part of these reviews so that their experiences of living at the home are central to the process. This embedded monitoring encourages reflective practice and ensures that the staff team is accountable to other professionals.

As a result of the monitoring, the home has developed a plan which outlines how it will address short term issues, such as ensuring care plans are relevant and up to date, as well as longer term goals, such as refurbishment and training.

At the last inspection seven requirements and two recommendations were made. These have been addressed. Management arrangements in the home are clear. There is a full time acting manager and a member of staff who deputises for him in his absence, for example when he is not on shift. This is underpinned by having an on call rota consisting of managers in the organisation, including out of office hours. This means that there is always a manager available to support and advise staff on shift.

There is a rolling programme in place for all members of staff, including directors and shift workers, to attend safeguarding training. This ensures that everyone is up to date with their obligations should they have concerns about a young person's well-being or the practice of a colleague. This has been supported by training all members of staff in child sexual exploitation. Members of staff display a sound knowledge of the symptoms and behaviours young people may display if they are being exploited in this manner, and know what to do and who to inform if they have concerns.

There are clear processes and clear recording of how safe working practice is maintained. This includes records of supervision where issues have been discussed as well records of discussions with therapists and directors if there is a need for more involved examination of practice. The disciplinary procedure to address poor performance or other concerns about staff is robust.. Records show a clear timeline, any expectations placed on staff, and subsequent decisions such as written warnings or additional training needs.

The home has a policy in place for members of staff to follow in the event there is an incident which needs to be shared with external agencies, such as the local safeguarding social work service and Ofsted. The home follows this policy effectively

when needed. The home also liaises with placing authorities well in the event of any concerns being raised. The effectiveness and promptness of communication in these matters has been confirmed by placing social workers and the LADO.

The home has enough members of staff to meet the needs of the young people. All members of staff receive regular supervision and they feel supported through this process. One member of staff said, 'A great team, I love working here'. There is a varied training program which enables members of staff to develop their skills and knowledge. This includes training in key areas such as attachment theory, child sexual exploitation and child protection. As a result of the training and support they receive, members of staff feel confident in working with the young people and are equipped to help them to make progress in their lives.

Records in the home are subject to regular auditing by senior members of staff and this ensures that they are relevant, accurate and up to date.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.