

Bridge End

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC368637
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Setting address	Bridge End, St. Georges Lees, SANDWICH, Kent, CT13 9JS
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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	25/03/2014

Bridge End

Inspection date	18/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
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There is a suitably qualified and experienced team in place, and this has often given effective leadership and management. However, there have been significant regulatory breaches in relation to the safeguarding of young people which have resulted in this inadequate judgement.

Progress has been made since the last inspection, and the three previous recommendations have been met. However, there is limited evidence to demonstrate that progress will be sustained over time. Shortfalls identified at the last full inspection have been repeated, such as the failure to report significant events to external agencies and to ensure that management arrangements are clear when the Registered Manager is absent from the building.

Safeguarding arrangements within the home are inadequate. Staff, including managers, are not fully competent in recognising and responding properly to potential child protection issues. A significant concern identified was not suitably referred to external safeguarding agencies. An internal investigation into staff practice took place but was not robust and did not involve the young person's views. A presumption of innocence was assumed. Record keeping of investigations and risk management decisions are poor or non-existent. This practice fails to adequately

protect young people.

Young people reflect that it has been a time of change within the home. Most say they feel safe living in the home. Relationships between young people and staff are generally caring and supportive; this has been compromised by a failure to keep proper boundaries. Young people's individual health needs are identified and fully met. Positive feedback has been obtained from placing social workers about the impact the home has on the lives of young people placed.

The Registered Manager is now on maternity leave and a new manager took up their post in July 2014. The new manager is yet to be registered with Ofsted. His most recent experience is within Care Quality Commission registered homes for adults with learning disabilities.

The home has a development plan in place. However, this plan lacks challenging targets to further improve outcomes for young people within the home.

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
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
13/11/2013	Full	adequate
18/02/2013	Interim	good progress
31/07/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
9 (2001)	ensure the registered provider and the registered manager shall carry on or manage the home with sufficient care, competence and skill; in particular ensure there are clear arrangements to ensure the appropriate management of the home when the registered manager is absent (Regulation 9 (1))	22/09/2014
9 (2001)	ensure the responsible individuals and registered manager undertake from time to time such training as is appropriate to ensure that he has the experience and skills necessary for carrying on the children's home (Regulation 9 (2) (3))	22/09/2014
11	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to	22/09/2014

(2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there; in particular ensure there are clear risk management arrangements in place for assessing staff practice (Regulation 11 (1) (a) (b))	
16 (2001)	ensure the written policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect is implemented (Regulation 16 (1) (a) (b))	22/09/2014
16 (2001)	ensure that there is liaison and cooperation with any local authority which is, or may be making child protection enquiries in relation to any child accommodated in the home; and the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2) (a and b))	22/09/2014
16 (2001)	ensure that written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	22/09/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30 (1))	22/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home. With specific reference to child sexual exploitation and, professional boundaries training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of staff, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. The information is retained on the confidential file, even after someone leaves the organisation, until the person reaches normal retirement age, or for

ten years if this is longer. (NMS 20.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people demonstrate a good understanding of healthy living. They do not engage in risk taking behaviours such as substance misuse or drinking alcohol. They take part in lots of physical activities such as dance clubs, football training, bike rides and regular walks around the local area. This positively supports their physical health. Young people take a good level of responsibility for their own health and they do not smoke. They attend all routine health appointments and eat a healthy diet. Some young people attend group therapy sessions. This has had a positive impact on their peer relationships and has increased their confidence.

Young people learn independence skills which are relevant to their individual stage in life. They engage in daily chores around the home which are shared appropriately between all the young people. This creates an orderly and harmonious atmosphere where everyone helps each other in the running of the home. Daily tasks include laying the table, clearing away or washing up. Some young people enjoy cooking and baking on a regular basis. All young people use their pocket money and allowances to save for and purchase items, with discreet supervision. This provides young people with good preparation for adulthood.

Young people are supported to maintain appropriate attachments to those who are important to them. Staff suitably facilitate and organise family contact sessions. Some young people have recently re-engaged with family members. This is positive for them now and in their future.

Young people take part in a wide range of activities both within the home and in the wider community. These include trips to concerts and theatre shows, youth clubs, participation in local tournaments, cinema trips and exploring the local area through picnics and nearby events. This provides good opportunity to make new friends and take an active role in the local area. Some young people have baked cakes for charity events. Others have undertaken a charity bike ride. They have all raised funds for charitable causes.

All young people maintain full attendance at school. They achieve good educational outcomes in relation to their individual starting points when placed within the home.

Quality of care **good**

Staff work in partnership with educational establishments to ensure good communication between home and school. Staff openly support and praise young people's good educational achievements by attending key events such as the end of

term assembly. Staff successfully encourage young people to participate in a good range of activities. Young people know how to complain, and they take part in daily house meetings to share their views. Through these meetings they discuss their plans for the day, choose activities and comment on menus. This provides young people with a daily forum to express their views, preferences and feelings about living in the home, which all the young people engage well in.

Young people's individual care plans and therapeutic treatment plans are highly individualised to each child and are up to date. Young people are encouraged to, and do, add their own views to their records including their care plans and key worker action plans. This means they are suitably involved in commenting about their personal care plans. Matters relating to diversity are openly celebrated within the home. Themed nights offer opportunities to learn about different cultures. Recent events have included a Canada evening and a Hawaiian celebration. In addition, young people have their own identity display boards where they celebrate their own background and achievements. This practice helps all in the home to learn about each other and promotes positive discussion of differences.

Staff work effectively in partnership with external health professionals to ensure that young people's individual health needs are identified and fully met. Some young people have been supported by external specialist nurses who have helped them understand their own unique health conditions. This pro-active approach helps lessen anxiety for young people. Arrangements for the administration and recording of medications are safe and effective.

The home is located within easy walking distance of public transport links and local shops and facilities. This supports positive community engagement. The home is maintained to a good standard. Young people like their bedrooms and personalise them. The home is currently developing an outside building into a dance studio for young people to use. Young people are excited at being involved in the creation of this new fitness space. The rear garden offers space to play basketball, or football and to relax in the outdoors. The home provides a range of spaces for young people to relax, play games and meet with friends and family.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

Most young people say they feel safe living in the home. However, young people in the home are not properly protected demonstrated by an instance in which staff failed to apply sufficient competence at recognising and responding to child safeguarding issues. There has been a lack of robust implementation of the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance demonstrated through a failure to share appropriate information with all relevant external safeguarding agencies when concerns were raised regarding staff practice toward young people. These concerns included a member of staff colluding in a shared secret with a young person. Although the home has written child protection procedures, these have not been

followed in all cases. This does not protect young people.

Internal investigations undertaken by the organisation into specific concerns have focused on procedural and disciplinary matters and have not involved the voice of young people. These investigations have not considered fully the wider safeguarding implications of practice issues raised. As a result, young people are not properly protected.

Record-keeping relating to concerns raised about staff practice is poor in quality. They do not demonstrate decision-making and risk-management by responsible individuals. Wider learning and reflection from allegations is limited to a necessarily restricted discussion at a staff team meeting. This is of particular concern within a therapeutic community where professional boundaries have been crossed. The response of responsible individuals has been based solely on disciplining individual staff. This does not demonstrate a robust re-evaluation of the implementation of safeguarding or professional boundaries policies following a significant breach.

Managers in the home have failed to follow up child protection matters properly, for example by not completing outcome letters detailing the decisions reached following internal investigations. This fails to provide staff subject to an allegation clear and written confirmation of the outcome to refer to and learn from.

There has been no young person reported missing from the home since the last inspection. Young people report that any bullying is rare and staff intervene to stop it. There have been no instances of bullying since the last visit by Ofsted.

The recruitment and vetting of new staff meets regulatory requirements and national minimum standards. This protects young people from unsuitable staff commencing work within the organisation.

Two previous recommendations related to the use of physical intervention in the home have been met. Eight out of nine contracted staff have completed restraint training and this includes how to initiate safe ground holds. This ensures that most staff now have adequate training to ensure safe practice in the case of a ground restraint. None of the young people currently placed in the home has been held in a physical intervention since the last inspection. Staff spoken to during the inspection were clear about the law relating to restraint and the importance of using it only as a last resort.

The home is free from unnecessary hazards and physically safe for young people. Health and safety measures in place ensure that essential equipment is routinely tested.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The lack of effective and competent management of this home affects the safeguarding of young people. The Registered Manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2012. She holds the NVQ level 4 qualification in childcare. Since the last inspection, she has completed the level 5 diploma and awaits formal certification. 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 received and appraised.

Two significant events relating to the safeguarding and protection of young people in the home were notified appropriately since the last inspection. However, two serious complaints against members of staff within the home were not notified to Ofsted, and in one case the placing authority was not informed. A regulatory requirement to ensure external agencies and the regulator are informed of significant events was raised at the last full inspection in November 2013. While progress was made in meeting this requirement in March 2014, this has not been sustained. This failure to work in partnership with external professionals does not safeguard young people.

At the full inspection of November 2013, a recommendation was set to ensure there were clear arrangements for deputising when the Registered Manager is absent. This recommendation was met by the March 2014 inspection. However, a further requirement is set at this full inspection which relates to ensuring clarity of arrangements for the adequate oversight of the home when the Registered Manager is absent, in this case when a covering manager is placed in the home. The Registered Manager was moved outside of this home for a period of time. The covering manager and Registered Manager were contradictory in their understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities while they were covering and managing the home during this period. This risks confusion and may have contributed to the failure to notify one significant event to one placing authority.

Currently, 55% of the staff team hold a level 3 diploma in childcare or equivalent qualification. The remainder of the staff team are either actively completing a relevant course, or are within their probationary periods. Staff attend regular refresher training in a wide range of safe caring topics. Since the last inspection, some staff have completed learning in areas such as epilepsy, food hygiene and advanced attachment theory. This refreshes their skills in a range of key topics and helps to ensure young people's individual needs are met. All staff completed safeguarding training in 2013 with the exception of the new manager, who is scheduled to undertake a safeguarding course in October 2014. However, only 44% of the staff team have completed specific sexual exploitation training. This means not all staff within the team hold current and up to date knowledge on child exploitation.

External monitoring visits occur on a monthly basis. These involve feedback from young people, their parents and placing social workers. Internal monitoring reports are carried out and submitted to Ofsted in line with regulatory requirements. However, the most recent report does not evaluate how the home manages allegations against staff which have occurred during the three month reporting

period. This does not demonstrate learning and actions taken by the Registered Manager as a result of this allegation.

Staff receive regular supervision which is recorded and child-focused. Young people are suitably involved in staff appraisals. They provide feedback on staff member's strengths and development points. This demonstrates to young people that their views on staff who care for them are listened to and valued in relation to planned staff performance management reviews.

The current 2014 development plan is not challenging, and describes goals which are also regulatory requirements. Timescales in the development plan are lengthy, for example, up to one year to obtain a mirror for the downstairs bathroom. Some timescales are unclear, such as 'ongoing' for developing homework space for each young person in the home. Progress on the 2013 / 2014 development plan and achievements, including the impact of the plan on young people's outcomes is not documented. The current plan does state that previous Ofsted recommendations have been completed, but no impact of this is noted.

A previous recommendation to ensure that risk assessments and positive handling plans are updated following any identified increase in the risk of potential harm has been met. Risk assessments and positive handling plans sampled reflect young people's current risk levels. This ensures staff refer to up-to-date information relating to young people's behaviours and take appropriate action.

This children's home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. Although the home had made good progress by the interim inspection, this has not been sustained. Weak management oversight and poor management of child protection concerns means young people's welfare is not adequately safeguarded.

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.