

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC368637
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 Scholfield
Registered manager	Raymond Ashton
Inspector	Jan Hunnam

Inspection date	19/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC368637

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- A strong Registered Manager leads a staff team committed to embedding nurturing, therapeutic care. His support in changing the culture within the home is benefiting young people and they are making significant progress.
- Research-led attachment practice implemented by a team of therapists who guide and support staff in their practice. This enable young people to build trusting relationships and thrive within a family-orientated environment where their individual needs are thoughtfully considered and met.
- Evaluative and analytical monitoring by the Registered Manager drives forward continuous improvement to promote positive outcomes for young people.
- Young people experience stability, security and safety. Their welfare is at the centre of all practice within the home.
- Comprehensive care plans and robust risk assessments are current. With a focus on their emotional needs, young people respond to specific, individualised support developing self-confidence, appropriate social skills and a more positive view of themselves. They are showing notable improvements in their behaviour, educational progress and in managing their emotions.
- Not all staff have undertaken training to manage incidents of self-harm safely and the related policy requires review.

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

Recommendations

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

ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm, particularly in relation to all forms of self-harm (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 43 paragraph 9.12)

ensure that the policy on protection of children includes arrangements to counter risks of self-harm and that the policy is reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 44 paragraph 9.19)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation. It offers therapeutic residential care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/10/2014	Full	Good
18/08/2014	Full	Inadequate
25/03/2014	Interim	Good progress
13/11/2013	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff are committed to working therapeutically with young people. Young people are provided with positive experiences and opportunities to develop their full potential. Relationships are warm and friendly with young people clearly demonstrating that they enjoy being with the adults who care for them. As strong, trusting relationships develop, they become more self-confident and more comfortable in talking to staff about their concerns, feelings and opinions, knowing that staff will listen and respond to them appropriately. Daily key working sessions, linked to a key working action plan, focusing on their current development needs, allow young people to explore issues and accept support. Informal, daily meetings, provide a forum to discuss issues affecting everyday living and group dynamics. Young people are aware of the process for making a formal complaint and use the procedure effectively. The Registered Manager fully investigates their objections and informs them in writing of the outcome. Consequently, young people know they have a strong voice within the home, realise their views are important and that they are listened to and respected. Some young people are making excellent progress in education. Effective links between staff and education staff, foster partnership working to ensure their individual needs are met. A young person who has not attended school for several years prior to residing at the home, is showing commendable achievements in attending school, regulating their behaviour and adopting a positive attitude to learning. Another young person has progressed to college to undertake 'A' Levels. Where young people are experiencing difficulties in school, residential staff liaise closely with school staff, therapists and external partners. Together, they provide effective support to promote their learning and plan strategies in the young person's best interests. Access to a wide range of recreational and social activities is an essential component of the home's therapeutic approach to promote positive outcomes. Staff encourage young people to widen their experiences to develop their social skills, self-identity, self-esteem and confidence. Staff use their own particular leisure interests to introduce young people to new activities such as fishing and also arrange activities according to young people's specific interests. Current activities include motocross, rugby, football and Heroclix. Staff are keen to	

encourage young people to have age-appropriate experiences. When appropriate, they provide opportunities for young people to regress, recognising that some may have missed out important developmental stages in their past.

Young people receive health services according to their individual needs. Detailed health plans demonstrate that staff closely monitor their health. Their emotional well-being has a high priority. Therapists complete individual emotional needs assessments which identify support strategies for staff to follow. Young people have access to individual therapy and group therapy. 'Therapeutic thinking time' meetings, led by therapists, provide staff with opportunities to reflect on their practice, to evaluate strategies implemented to support young people's specific attachments patterns. Young people benefit from this focus on their psychological and emotional well-being. Their behaviour is improving and they are developing ways of regulating their own emotions and building emotional resilience.

Young people are developing independence skills in preparation for adult life. Plans and key work sessions support young people to take more responsibility for themselves within the home and the wider community.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home provides young people with stability, safety and security within a homely, family orientated environment. They develop positive, trusting relationships through close supervision from staff who focus on providing consistent care with structure and routines yet implementing the necessary flexibility to provide individualised care. From this secure base, young people make significant progress. A Social Worker commented that a young person 'is developing positive attachments to some staff and the placement has provided the young person with stability'. Detailed care plans, with a focus on young people's emotional needs, provide staff with guidance and strategies to promote their development. Individualised risk assessments are current with appropriate measures in place to protect them from harm. Staff address high-risk behaviour, such as solvent misuse, in key work sessions to raise young people's awareness of the damaging repercussions of such action. Not all staff have undertaken training to manage incidents of self-harm safely, including solvent abuse. The policy relating to such behaviour does not provide sufficient clarity for staff to protect young people.	

Staff complete training in recognising and understanding young people's emotional difficulties. They are skilled in implementing de-escalation techniques to reduce the necessity for physical intervention when young people are experiencing emotional distress. Positive handling plans identify specific triggers, warning signs and prevention strategies to help staff avoid physical intervention or manage such situations safely when necessary.

As young people settle at the home and trust staff to respond to their needs, they are able to accept the emotional support staff offer and the necessity for restraint reduces. Incidents involving physical intervention are well-recorded and monitored by the Registered Manager to ensure staff consider young peoples' views and they provide effective, safe support.

Incidents involving young people being away from the home without permission are rare. On such occasions, staff respond effectively, applying agreed procedures including return interviews, to safeguard them and minimise their risk of harm.

Young people and staff benefit from the training, advice and guidance provided by the organisation's experienced safeguarding officer. Appropriate consultations and referrals are made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when concerns are raised. Internal investigations, when recommended by the LADO, are conducted thoroughly and fully explore safeguarding concerns.

Staff receive comprehensive training in safeguarding matters including on-line safety and child sexual exploitation. Young people receive specific on-line safety training. Staff regularly revisit their understanding and awareness of the risks they face in key work sessions to highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe on-line. Staff complete the local authority's risk assessment toolkit for child sexual exploitation for each young person and have measures in place to safeguard their welfare.

Robust recruitment processes are in place to safeguard young people from unsuitable adults working with them. All checks on prospective employees are undertaken before they commence working at the home.

Health and safety checks are up to date. Appropriate fire safety measures are routinely applied. Currently, the Registered Manager completes the fire risk assessment but a specialist, external professional will shortly undertake this evaluation to ensure all possible fire risks have been identified and minimised.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of	Outstanding

leaders and managers	
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The Registered Manager has been in post since July 2014. He is suitably qualified and experienced for the role and is registered with Ofsted. Since his appointment, he has focused on changing the culture within the home and adopting a clear therapeutic approach to caring for young people. Staff report that 'he has a different outlook on caring for young people. Before, the home was very boundary orientated, but now staff look at the needs of young people in much more depth with staff showing more flexibility to meet their needs within a therapeutic approach'. Young people are benefiting from this focus on their specific emotional needs and the Registered Manager's inspirational guidance in changing staff practice.

The Registered Manager is providing strong, confident leadership and support for the staff team to embed this new approach. He has high expectations of staff to work positively and proactively with young people and provide high standards of care. member of staff reports that 'he is an excellent mentor in helping to change working practices to work therapeutically and to constantly look at the meaning of young people's behaviour'. The staff team are working very well together. Staff feel valued. A member of staff commented, they are 'a very committed, reflective, consistent and stable staff team'. Staff receive regular supervision centred on improving staff practice to meet young people's individual needs.

In a relatively short period, the Registered Manager has changed the ethos of the home. Staff are now fully implementing the aim of helping young people develop a secure base so they can achieve their full potential. Consequently, young people are making considerable progress with imminent plans for two young people to move to foster placements. His leadership is influential in changing young people's lives.

Comprehensive induction programmes and training effectively prepare staff for their role in meeting young people's complex needs. Led by a renowned academic, specialising in the application of attachment practice, on-going staff development enables staff to fulfil the aim of providing a nurturing and therapeutic approach to young people's care. A team of qualified therapists work closely with staff in 'therapeutic thinking time' sessions to analyse young people's behaviour and emotions and devise strategies relevant to their specific attachment style. Consequently, young people receive directed and individualised support helping them make progress and achieve positive outcomes.

On-going monitoring of the home by the Registered Manager drives improvement in the quality of care. A member of staff commented that he is 'very reflective and analytical; he has an eye for detail and monitors very closely'. Quarterly internal monitoring reports confirm this observation. His assessments are detailed and evaluative demonstrating a full understanding of activity within the home and

young people's progress. A current development plan identifies specific action to improve the experience and care of young people. Regular monthly external monitoring reports contribute to this effective quality assurance process. The Registered Manager has demonstrated sustained improvement since his appointment and a positive impact on the lives of young people.

Young people's views are an important part of reviewing the quality of care. The Registered Manager carefully considers complaints from young people and utilises this feedback to improve staff practice such as ensuring staff use respectful language at all times. Young people receive formal letters outlining the outcome of the complaint, emphasising to them that their opinions are important and are taken seriously.

The Registered Manager takes an active role in reviewing and evaluating young people's care plans to ensure strategies promote their progress. Proactive work with other professionals and agencies such as school staff and health professionals enhances the support the home offers for young people with complex needs. The Registered Manager takes appropriate action to review plans when it is identified that young people are not making progress.

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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