

# SC368637

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 aged between eight and 17 years old 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 25 February 2019.

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 27 February 2019

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

How well children and young people 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:** 7 November 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 07/11/2017      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 06/12/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 26/05/2016      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 09/02/2016      | 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   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—<br/>provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response.<br/>(Regulation 34 (2)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that records show the outcome of a safeguarding referral and that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child from further harm.</p> | 11/04/2019 |

### Recommendations

- 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 11.19)
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.11)

In particular, ensure that the children see the results of their requests from the daily meetings.

- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, the registered manager must show sufficient professional curiosity towards staff conduct following allegations made by a child.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Staff provide the children with nurturing and attuned care. One child said the staff 'help you, are kind and caring'. Staff recognise that progress is not always linear and support the children through their successes and setbacks. Staff build on the children's small steps that lead to them developing greater confidence and resilience.

There is a calm and respectful atmosphere in the home. Staff promote healthy eating and provide good-quality, home-cooked meals which children are involved in choosing. Children enjoy baking and helping in the kitchen. Tasks and household chores around the home are used to help the children to develop their life skills.

Daily meetings are held during the children's tea time. Staff encourage the children to use this time to reflect and discuss any issues arising for them. Staff show a genuine interest in the children's day-to-day experiences, and plan themes for discussion. Conversations are varied, from reminders about what to do if there was a fire, to discussions around current topics such as Brexit. These daily meetings could be further strengthened by the staff recording their response to requests made by children. This would ensure that the children see the results of their views being listened to and acted on.

Staff ensure that the children's healthcare needs are well met. Children have regular dental and optician's appointments and are helped to attend medical services when required. Staff prioritise the emotional health and well-being of the children. For one child, an autism assessment has been commissioned by the leaders of the home to bypass a long waiting list. The manager and the staff are committed to ensuring that the children are not disadvantaged by living outside their home authority, and that they receive timely support and help when it is needed.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The routines and structure in the home provide the children with predictability and a sense of safety. Staff help the children to repair relationships and to accept responsibility for mistakes without experiencing this as shameful. Children appear comfortable and relaxed in the presence of staff and each other. Older children are caring and kind to younger children.

There have been two lapses in safeguarding, which is otherwise good. One was in response to an allegation from a child about staff conduct after a restraint. The second involved a disclosure made by a child during a respite visit. Records did not show the full follow-up to the outcomes of the referrals. In these two incidents, there was an over-reliance on external agencies' findings, and a lack of management scrutiny regarding the staff conduct. Leaders and the registered manager have instigated changes to procedures to avoid similar incidents occurring.

Staff spoken with were confident in their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff show a good understanding of how to keep children safe when using social media. Risk assessments and positive behaviour plans are detailed and of high quality. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of the children's individual vulnerabilities, risks and strengths.

Staff receive regular training in the use of restraint and de-escalation strategies. The restraint records show that physical interventions are used as a last resort. There are clear procedures for staff to follow and good management oversight of each incident. For one child, for whom there had been an increase in the number of restraints, an external senior staff member reviewed the restraint logs. This provided an additional layer of scrutiny to ensure the safety of the child, as well as identifying patterns and new learning for the staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is well run with a registered manager who holds high aspirations for the children and motivates the staff to address any shortfalls. This is enhanced by a visible leadership team who are ambitious for the staff to develop expertise in providing high-quality care that can help transform the lives of the children.

There is an open culture in the home that is fostered by leaders and the registered manager. Staff use daily handovers as a forum to reflect on what has worked well and new learning. Regular consultations with the in-house clinical team extends the staff knowledge, to develop ways of working with the children that addresses both past trauma and current behaviours.

Supervision is reflective, focused on practice issues and the needs of the children. Staff meetings provide the team with opportunities to discuss the children's progress and new strategies to strengthen the support to promote positive outcomes. Consequently, the staff perform their roles with skill and competence.

The registered manager works well with external professionals, who are all very complimentary about the home. The multi-agency approach to planning is good. This could be expanded by the children having greater access to their care records, to have a sense of the records belonging to them. This would enhance the children's understanding of themselves and their situation.

## **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:** SC368637

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Channels and Choices Kent LLP

**Registered provider address:** Camburgh House, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3DN

**Responsible individual:** Lisa Speight

**Registered manager:** Sharne Barker

## Inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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