

SC385631

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 provides care for up to 4 children with social and emotional difficulties. It is operated by a private organisation. There were 4 children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2023.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2026

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	good
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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: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
13/03/2024	Full	Good
21/03/2023	Full	Good
07/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on to foster care following a carefully planned transition. Another child has moved into the home. The manager met with this child in advance to provide clear information about the home and help reduce their anxieties, particularly as they had experienced a period of instability and several moves in quick succession. Since arriving, the child has made notable progress. They have begun to form trusting relationships with staff and are developing their emotional vocabulary, which has helped them to express their feelings, settle quickly and experience greater stability.

All the children are making exceptional progress and benefiting from a wide range of positive experiences. The staff support the older children well to develop essential independence skills that will help them as they move towards adulthood. This includes support with independent travel, personal safety and building and maintaining friendships and relationships. As a result, they are becoming confident, responsible and increasingly independent teenagers who enjoy age-appropriate opportunities like their peers.

Children participate in a variety of clubs and community activities, such as Scouts and cadets, and enjoy interests including scootering, swimming lessons and family-style holidays. These shared memories are evident around the home, with colourful pictures and canvases decorating the walls. Children's views about the home are consistently positive. One child, when asked if they would change anything about living here, responded confidently, saying, 'Nothing.'

Children's culture and identity are understood, celebrated and central to their care planning. Staff support children to explore their ancestry and heritage and ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and resources that they need to meet their cultural needs confidently. Whenever possible, families are involved in key decisions, and children are supported to feel comfortable with how family time is arranged. These arrangements are child centred and sensitively facilitated, and consistently positive experiences for the children.

All the children are attending education and are thriving. The staff have supported them effectively through significant transitions, including moves from primary to secondary school, which have been managed sensitively and with careful planning. Older children travel to school independently and are supported to build and maintain friendships in the community. When additional help is required, such as academic tutoring, staff ensure that this is put in place promptly. One child has independently applied to a drama and performing arts school. The staff are extremely proud of this achievement and the child's determination and ambition.

The manager ensures that children's views are at the heart of their care planning. Children's wishes inform every decision about them, and staff are passionate about supporting children to share their thoughts. One staff member said, when reflecting on why they liked working in the home, 'Every decision is led by the children.' Staff and children have fantastic relationships, built on trust, respect and boundaries. This helps the children experience love and stability.

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

There is a strong and well-embedded safeguarding culture within the staff team, which is evident in the care provided to children. Staff carry out focused work with children when concerns arise. For example, one child received targeted support about online safety to help them understand potential risks and develop strategies to keep themselves safe. Staff hold regular discussions with children about key aspects of personal safety and use everyday opportunities to reinforce and extend their understanding. This proactive approach helps children to become increasingly aware of how to keep themselves safe.

Staff and children reflect and learn following any incidents. Risk plans are updated so that staff have up-to-date guidance and can ensure that children's needs are met. Staff only use physical interventions when necessary, and complete follow-up work with the children after each incident. However, some records do not fully capture the discussions held with the child by the registered person.

Comprehensive plans guide staff on how to support children's day-to-day needs. These are reviewed regularly in conjunction with the in-house therapy team. This ensures that the staff have an opportunity to reflect on what has worked well and what else they could try when things may not be working. Consequently, children have made good progress and can manage their feelings, recognising their emotions and how they can express themselves safely.

Safe recruitment processes are understood and implemented by the manager and staff responsible for this area of practice. However, one record of recruitment does not fully demonstrate the sound decision-making about a staff member's suitability. This shortfall in recording undermines an otherwise rigorous process that ensures that only suitable adults are employed at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager provides strong, passionate and child-centred leadership. Staff place children firmly at the heart of their daily practice, creating a genuine sense of family and belonging that is evident from the moment you enter the home.

Staff feel supported, valued and confident to challenge one another appropriately, knowing that they share common values and a commitment to securing the best outcomes for children. The registered manager is tenacious in advocating for children and is willing to challenge external professionals when this is needed to ensure that children receive the support that they are entitled to.

The staff and managers benefit from a strong culture of support that enables them to provide consistent high-quality care to children. The responsible individual is an active and effective member of the team. They know the children well and offer regular guidance to both the manager and staff. This supportive approach extends across the wider organisation. Senior leaders, including the director, recently visited the home to review the quality of care and to identify further opportunities for improvement. Staff feel valued, with senior leaders demonstrating their appreciation through reward events and thoughtful gestures to acknowledge the team's hard work. One staff member said, 'It is like being in a family, that's the best thing about the place.'

The children enjoy warm, trusting and secure relationships with staff, built on consistency and a clear understanding of their individual needs. The in-house therapy team plays a pivotal role in each child's journey, providing insightful guidance and therapeutic expertise from the point of their referral, through to ongoing work and their transition to their next home when ready. This integrated approach ensures that children receive the emotional support they need to heal from past trauma and make meaningful progress across all areas of their lives. The impact of this collaborative, therapeutic model is evident in the positive changes children experience in their wellbeing, behaviour and sense of safety.

Feedback from external professionals is extremely positive. Feedback includes, 'The children are well cared for and safeguarded, and it is evident that their wellbeing is a priority.' Another professional explained, 'The staff team provide a stable, calm, consistent and safe environment, enabling the children to have positive experiences and to thrive.'

All staff who were required to have completed their qualifications by a specified date have now completed this. Staff receive a comprehensive induction when they join and regular ongoing training to ensure that they have the skills and experience to support the children's needs.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all records of incidents of discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny and reflect discussions held with the children by the registered person. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that records of recruitment demonstrate that recruitment processes safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC385631

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Channels and Choices Kent LLP

Registered provider address: 15 West Street, Brighton BN1 2RL

Responsible individual: Adam Holland-Hobbs

Registered manager: Lucy Chaston

Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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