

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC434517
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Channels and Choices Limited
Registered person address	Invictus House 45 London Road River Dover Kent CT17 0SG

Responsible individual	Martin Scholfield
Registered manager	Briony Morgan
Inspector	Jan Hunnam

Inspection date	27/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Declined effectiveness
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	Good

SC434517

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from nurturing, therapeutic care. Research-led attachment practice, implemented by a team of therapists who guide and support staff, helps young people to develop trusting relationships and a more positive view of themselves.
- Young people enjoy living at the home. Staff actively engage with them in play and meaningful activities so they build self-confidence, a sense of identity and appropriate social skills.
- Warm, caring relationships between staff and young people are the foundation of young people feeling safe at the home. Their well-being, with a focus on their emotional needs, is at the centre of practice.
- The manager provides enthusiastic and strong leadership to a committed staff team who are well-trained and supported.
- Effective monitoring, with close evaluation of young people's progress, drives improvement ensuring young people have opportunities to make progress and fulfil their potential.
- Comprehensive care planning includes on-going review of young people's emotional needs with strategies to promote their well-being and protect them from harm.
- Although health and safety checks, including fire safety checks, are routinely applied, the fire alarm system does not have a current test certificate.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25(1)(a))	30/09/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined effectiveness
21/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
06/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
22/11/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people, often with severe attachment disorder, receive consistent and nurturing care. They receive one-to-one support from staff, befitting from knowing there is always someone to give them undivided attention and meet their needs. Consequently, they are building trusting relationships, developing a more positive view of themselves and a sense of belonging within the home. Key working is a particular strength of the home. Each young person has a tailored key worker action plan with specific areas identified to promote their development. Daily key working takes place to address current issues affecting their daily life or focussed work in relation to the key working plan. All staff are involved in implementing this plan, helping young people form relationships with other staff and accept the support offered from all staff. Young peoples' views are central to practice within the home. In addition to individual daily key work sessions, they also have opportunities to put forward their opinions in a daily group meeting. This enables them to contribute to the running of the home and discuss issues arising from living in a group. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure and have used it as another way of making their views known. These complaints are well-recorded, including an outcome letter to the young person when the matter has been investigated. It is evident that the manager and staff take the views of young people seriously, demonstrating that that they are listened to, respected and their opinions matter. All young people engage in education and are making progress. Some are progressing from a partial timetable to full integration and attending daily when previously they had not been attending for some time. Staff maintain close links with school staff, working in partnership to promote achievement. Staff provide additional support for homework, reading and specific play activities targeting young people's learning needs. Activities are an integral part of the homes therapeutic approach. Young people have opportunities to participate in new experiences and activities so they develop social skills, confidence and a sense of identity as they pursue their individual interests. Their activities also help promote positive relationships with staff and peers. They take part in cheerleading groups, teen gym, visit theme parks and London shows. Within the home, staff join in play activities so young people have	

fun, appropriate to their age and individual interests.

Young people learn new skills at a pace appropriate to their age and ability, developing independence and daily living skills confidently in preparation for adult life. Through therapeutic interventions, young people are learning coping skills to manage their emotions and keep themselves safe.

Staff work in partnership with health services to promote young people's well-being. Close monitoring of their health ensures their specific health needs are identified and met. Young people benefit from the close involvement of the organisation's clinical therapy team who deliver individual work, group work, staff support and staff training. Staff members use 'therapeutic thinking time' to assess and review their work and practice with young people. As a result they work effectively with the therapist to identify practical strategies to support them in relation to their specific attachment patterns. They are developing self-regulation of their emotions, showing reduced levels of anxiety and improved behaviour.

Staff work proactively with families so that young people maintain positive and meaningful relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The home is warm and welcoming where young people develop friendly and trusting relationships with staff. These relationships are at the heart of safeguarding practice providing young people with a secure base for them to thrive and maximise their potential. They feel safe having adults around them who they know will respond and meet their needs. A young person commented that staff 'care about me and talk to me if I am angry or upset'. Detailed assessment of young people's needs, with a focus on their emotional needs, result in comprehensive and detailed care plans. These guide staff in providing individualised strategies for support. Plans include current risk assessments, which demonstrate staff members' understanding of the risks associated with each young person. Appropriate measures are in place to protect them from harm. Therapeutic progress reports contribute to changing strategies to effectively support young people. Specific positive handling plans direct staff in providing personalised approaches when young people are distressed and communicating their feelings through challenging behaviour. With guidance from therapists and input from young people	

about what they find helpful when they are in a heightened state, staff are developing prevention and de-escalation techniques so that physical intervention is used as a last resort. Staff undertake training to provide such support safely and all such incidents are well-recorded and closely monitored by the manager. Post-incident reflections with staff and young people assist their understanding of events and inform future practice.

The staff team use sanctions effectively to help promote positive behaviour. Some sanctions involve young people in reflecting on their behaviour, with written work demonstrating they have given thought to how their behaviour is affecting others. For example, a young person was asked to identify three ways of showing respect for others and 10 words to describe how they would personally feel if someone showed them disrespect. This thoughtful approach assists young people in improving their behaviour.

Incidents involving young people being missing from care are infrequent. There has only been one incident since the last inspection where two young people left the home together without permission. Procedures are in place, including return interviews, to protect young people and allow staff to take appropriate action to ensure their safe return. Staff use these procedures effectively to safeguard young people to minimise their risk of harm.

An experienced safeguarding officer provides guidance and advice for the manager. This ensures any safeguarding concerns are robustly addressed through appropriate consultation and referral to the local authority designated officer. Staff receive training in all aspects of protecting and safeguarding young people, including on-line safety and child sexual exploitation. Arrangements for recruiting staff are safe and effective. All checks on prospective employees are undertaken before they commence work at the home.

Health and safety checks are up to date. Appropriate fire safety measures are routinely applied. However, the fire alarm system does not have a current test certificate demonstrating that it is effective in detecting fire within the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager has been in post since April 2015 having worked at the home for several years. She has applied for and been successful in her application to be the Registered Manager. She is suitably experienced and is undertaking the Level 5	

Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare.

The manager provides enthusiastic and committed leadership and management of the staff team, driving development of the home so that young people have the best possible experience living at the home. Staff report very positively on the support, guidance and advice she offers with one commenting 'she is amazing'.

Staff undertake comprehensive induction programmes and training ensuring they are confident and competent in their role. To fulfil the aim of providing a nurturing therapeutic approach, on-going staff development is in place to advance staff members' knowledge and understanding of attachment theory. A renowned academic, specialising in the application of attachment practice, leads this staff development. A team of therapists reinforce this therapeutic approach by means of 'therapeutic thinking time' sessions with staff. Consequently, young people benefit from excellent analysis of their behaviour and emotions resulting in helpful and practical strategies for staff to implement in a meaningful and thoughtful way. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal to individually support them in their role. Records of these individual sessions demonstrate a clear focus on the well-being of young people and support to improve staff practice.

Effective monitoring systems are in place. Monitoring reports by an independent visitor lead to actions to address shortfalls and advance improvement. The manager's quarterly monitoring report demonstrates in-depth analysis and evaluation of the quality of care with the individual needs of young people at the forefront. Close evaluation of young peoples' progress and development allows for prompt identification of their development needs and early implementation of strategies to provide them with opportunities to progress. Senior managers within the organisation are also involved in the development of the home within a structured format. The manager has clear objectives from a comprehensive development plan to ensure the home is continually working towards improved standards of care.

Proactive work with other agencies and professionals enhances the support provided by the home, including the local authority designated officer in relation to safeguarding concerns and health professionals such as the looked after children's nurse and the child and adolescent mental health service. Staff work in close partnership with young people's schools to promote their education and ensure they provide relevant support for individual needs. Staff also work in partnership with parents wherever possible, communicating regularly and keeping them up to date with significant issues and incidents.

The statement of purpose sets out the ethos, aims and objectives of the home and its approach to caring for young people. Transition planning is well-managed to promote stability within the home and ensure young people experience positive placement moves.

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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