

1244287

Registered provider: ROC Northwest Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of several owned and managed by a private company. It provides care and support for up to five children who can no longer live at home.

There is no registered manager in post.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 14 and 15 April 2021 to carry out a full inspection. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection date: 11 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 14 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/04/2021	Full	Inadequate
19/02/2020	Full	Good
21/11/2018	Full	Good
11/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are enjoying a better relationship with the staff because they have a stable staff team caring for them. As a result, children are increasing in confidence to talk to the staff when things are worrying them and know that the staff will help them to sort things out.

Children's health is improving. Healthcare plans are more detailed and outline the help and support that each child needs. One child has been able to explain their fears to staff about going to the dentist. A member of staff agreed to go with him, and the child has now received the necessary treatment.

Another child is going for walks with staff and has set himself swimming challenges to improve his fitness. This is a big change for the child and is indicative of their improving relationship with staff.

Care planning is improving. Plans reflect the current needs of the children and how these are to be met on a daily basis. Staff are more aware of any concerns for the children and are able to adapt the plans to support them. Plans are underway to support a child's move back to their family and include contingency plans should the move be delayed.

Children are engaging more in their education. One child has been supported to secure a college placement for September 2021, which is near their home. Another child is supported by a home tutor and the staff who are carrying out set tasks with him.

Staff are more aware of the children's education plans and timetables, which means that the children receive a consistent and supportive approach to engage with their learning. Consequently, the children appear to be enjoying their learning, which is supplemented with a range of enjoyable activities with staff.

Children are beginning to engage in developing their skills for independence, such as doing their laundry, understanding the value of money, budgeting and cooking. This is helping them to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

Children remain in regular contact with their families. Staff ensure that the children have opportunities to talk to their families and meet with them.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff spoken to demonstrate that they have a better understanding of child protection and safeguarding and who they would speak with to report any concerns.

However, on 14 April 2021, an incident took place at a local swimming pool involving the children. The records of the incident are poor and do not show what action was taken to safeguard the children. This does not demonstrate secure safeguarding practice.

Children are becoming more aware of the risks that they may face and how to keep themselves safe. This is because staff carry out direct work on topics such as bullying, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, and missing from home.

There have been no incidents of children being missing from home. Staff are aware of the action to take should this occur. Children's risk management plans provide better insight into the risks for each child and the action being taken to reduce these.

Behaviour management strategies are supportive of the children's individual needs, and provide clear, consistent boundaries for the children. As a result, there has been a decrease in negative behaviours.

A refurbishment programme is to begin shortly, which will include the provision of en-suite bathrooms in all children's bedrooms. Fire safety has improved as staff have removed the locks from the kitchen doors, which ensures that all means of escape are not obstructed.

Staff recruitment is ongoing, and all necessary checks are carried out to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, the manager has resigned from their post. The responsible individual and two registered managers from other homes in the company have been supporting the home. As of 14 June 2021, one of these managers will be overseeing the home daily and will apply to Ofsted for registration.

The home now has a stable staff team. Although some vacancies remain, there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children living here. Five members of staff are still in their probationary period and are to complete a level 3 qualification. Staff say that they feel supported by the management team, which is something that they said was lacking previously.

Staff have regular opportunities to receive one-to-one professional supervision and are meeting fortnightly as a team. They say that this has brought a more consistent approach to their work and has helped them to come together as a team.

Staff training is improving. However, they would benefit from more specific training, for example around autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, to further increase their knowledge and oversight of the children's needs.

Monitoring is not yet secure. The management team has not been diligent in its review of the incident on 14 April 2021. Reports from the independent visitor are informative and their comments are used to further promote changes in the home.

Record-keeping is improving. However, some records are not signed by the manager and do not contain the children's views. Also, some of the language used in the records is not appropriate, such as 'absconding' or describing the home as 'the service'. Children's meetings are not taking place at the request of the children; instead, staff are collecting children's views in more informal discussions.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi))	30 July 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	30 July 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))	
The registered person must appoint a person to manage the home if— there is no manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	30 July 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that is helpful to them. The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4 and 14.5)

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: 1244287

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ROC Northwest Limited

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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