

1256134

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home is registered to provide care for up to five children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for children with emotional and social difficulties.

A manager has been appointed but is not yet registered with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, there were four children living in the home.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 October 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	requires improvement
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
16/02/2022	Full	Good
22/01/2020	Full	Good
12/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a warm and welcoming home and speak positively about their experiences of living there. They said that the staff care about them and this makes them feel secure and happy. A child said, 'I have lived here for a while and get on well with staff. They encourage me to do well and understand when I am struggling with anything. I could not think of a better place to be.'

Some children have had numerous placements before moving into this home. This is underpinned by the longevity of placements. One social worker said, 'Since moving in, [Name of child] has developed a true sense of belonging. Staff understand their needs and support [the child] exceptionally well.' A relative of a child said, 'I have nothing but praise for the staff. [Name of child] is settled and happy and has made so much progress, it is wonderful to see. Whenever I have visited the home, I have been made to feel welcome. It really feels like a family home.'

Children's achievements and progress are recognised and celebrated. The provider has recently introduced further training for staff in relation to monitoring progress, to further enhance and recognise children's individual achievements.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out into semi-independent living and one child has moved in. The child who moved out provided positive feedback about their time at the home. They praised the support they received in planning for moving on to living independently and the ongoing support they receive from the staff. Planning for each move was robust. However, for the child who moved in, there has been a delay in receiving care planning documents from the placing authority. Although the manager has requested these, failure to receive them limits planning for this child.

Each child's healthcare needs are known and supported well. Children are registered with healthcare professionals and encouraged to attend routine and specialist healthcare appointments.

Education is promoted exceptionally well, with children attending and achieving positive educational outcomes. The child who has recently moved into the home is waiting for their education placement to be confirmed. In the meantime, staff are supporting them with in-house learning in the morning and then undertaking educational activities in the afternoon. This helps the child to have a consistent and clear timetable in preparation for attending school.

Children take part in a range of activities and follow their own individual hobbies and leisure pursuits.

Staff understand the importance of children maintaining positive family time, in accordance with their plans. They support time with family members and, where it has been agreed, family members visit the home and are made to feel welcome.

Children can personalise their own bedrooms to reflect their interests, and they have a say in the furnishings for the communal areas of the home. There are lots of games, books and facilities available for children to follow individual interests. This adds to making the home feel like their own home.

The home is a welcoming and homely environment for the children. However, a recent issue with water filtration, which has been rectified, has caused excessive staining to some of the showers and baths. Although useable, they do not reflect the rest of the high standards of the home's furnishings and decor. Refurbishment of the bathrooms is planned but a clear timescale has yet to be confirmed.

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

Children say they feel happy and safe living at the home. Children are kept safer as a result of staff following good-quality individualised care plans, behaviour support plans and risk management plans. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of these, providing guidance and support to children, as well as considering the group dynamics for children. Staff spend lots of time talking and interacting with children to discuss any concerns or issues children may have.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When this does occur, staff follow agreed procedures and make every attempt to contact them and find them. They work in partnership with other agencies tasked with safeguarding children, ensuring that children return home safely. Independent return home interviews take place and support children to discuss why they were missing.

Since the last inspection, there has been one allegation made by a child against a member of staff. This was managed in line with safeguarding procedures. The provider liaised with relevant agencies and an internal investigation was completed satisfactorily. The manager did not inform the regulator at the time of the incident; this was an oversight but did provide appropriate updates following the investigation.

Staff promote children's positive behaviour through encouragement and praise. Negative consequences are rarely used. However, one was used in response to a child displaying poor behaviour. The child's electronic games console was removed. This was not recorded as a consequence and was identified as an action that should not be taken in the child's individual behaviour support plan. The manager had not been made aware of this incident.

Since the last inspection, there have been no occasions when a child has had to be held to keep them safe. All staff have received appropriate training to make sure they understand procedures to follow in the event this is required. De-escalation

techniques are used effectively, and this has meant behaviour has been managed well.

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

The home has not had a registered manager since May 2022. The current manager was appointed at the end of January 2023. The manager was previously the deputy manager at the home and knows the children and staff well. She has high aspirations for all children and strives to ensure they have every opportunity possible to achieve good outcomes. However, her application to register as manager of the home was significantly delayed. Some of the delay was outside the manager's control. Ofsted has taken this into account when reaching the judgement. The manager is currently completing her level 5 qualification to further underpin her practice.

The staff team benefits from the manager's clear leadership and guidance. She uses internal and external monitoring systems to review practice in the home. However, one shortfall was identified during the inspection in relation to a consequence. This was addressed by the manager at the time of the inspection, to make sure all staff are aware of the need for paperwork to be shared with the manager.

The manager is supported by a deputy manager, two team leaders and a permanent staff team. Staff say they feel supported and valued in their roles. They benefit from a clear induction, regular team meetings and reflective supervisions and their performance is reviewed annually. Staff have opportunities for progression. All mandatory training is in date, with additional training provided to further enhance staff knowledge.

The manager has addressed the requirement at the last inspection in relation to consistency of staffing for children. The recommendation in relation to providing specialist training for staff in relation to sexualised behaviour has been partially met. Training has been identified, but as yet not delivered. Interim online training has been provided.

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, The 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) In particular, ensure that steps are taken so that the provider has the necessary copies of care and placement plans.	1 December 2023
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(v)(vii))	1 November 2023

In particular, ensure that staff follow the home's policy on de-escalating behaviour and the child's agreed behaviour support plan. Staff should record when a consequence has been issued and the manager should evaluate the effectiveness of each measure.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	1 November 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the condition of the home is maintained to a high standard throughout. This includes the replacement of items which have been heavily stained due to issues with the home's water filtration system.
(‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, this refers to specialised training for staff in relation to responding to sexualised behaviours.
(‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: 1256134

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

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

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Oldham, Social Care Inspector

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