

1277380

Roc Northwest Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private provider.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2019.

Inspection date: 2 December 2020

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit took place due to a complaint received by the regulator. The complainants identified several areas of poor and unsafe practice within the home. These included children being bullied and disrespected, insufficient staffing, lack of managerial support, children being admitted whose needs could not be met, use of unauthorised holds, excessive punishments, lack of training for staff, managers not abiding by government guidelines relating to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and family contact not being promoted.

The home has a contingency plan in place which allows for reduced staffing levels in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. Such an outbreak did occur, and the home was staffed minimally during this time. Additional staff were brought in from other homes when staffing levels were not enough to meet the needs of the children. The children's social workers and Ofsted were informed. Children had to isolate for slightly longer than was necessary due to insufficient staffing. Most children reported they were not unduly distressed by having to remain in the home and being cared for by fewer staff.

Children said that they do not suffer from bullying either by staff or by each other. They were observed to have positive relationships and played together. Staff were observed to be warm and caring towards children throughout the visit. They were also observed to be skilled in communicating with children whose verbal

communication was limited. Concerns about a bullying culture are taken seriously by the provider. Action is taken to investigate any allegations of a bullying culture.

Staff are well trained. They have training in mandatory and child-specific areas. They are trained to care for children with autism, oppositional defiance disorder, attachment disorder and sexualised behaviour. Staff report feeling suitably skilled and trained to fulfil their roles.

Thorough matching assessments take place before a child is admitted. There was no evidence that children had been admitted whose needs could not be met, or who had a detrimental impact on other residents. Evidence from observations, and from speaking to staff and children showed that children were well matched.

In general, sanctions are proportionate and appropriate. On one occasion, a child was given an inappropriate and disproportionate sanction. This was not restorative. The behaviour displayed by the child was indicative of distress rather than poor behaviour. The sanction was excessive.

One child was high risk when travelling in a vehicle. His risk assessment did not reflect the severity of the risk. It did not contain recent information relating to this risk. As such, staff may not have knowledge of this risk, or be alert to strategies to keep him safe. A requirement is made under regulation 12 to reflect this shortfall.

A further requirement is made under regulation 12. This relates to a failure to follow the government COVID-19 guidelines. This is due to the manager calling a member of staff into the home to work when they should have been isolating. This posed a risk to both children and staff.

Physical intervention records sampled showed a lack of managerial oversight and follow-up. One incident recorded that staff had not read the child's updated behaviour management plan. As such they were unaware of strategies to manage his behaviour. Another incident record had no child debrief. One incident looked as though it could have been avoided had staff removed themselves from the situation. The provider has acted when concerns have been raised about inappropriate use of physical intervention and unauthorised holds.

Children's contact arrangements are not always clearly recorded. Their contact plans are not all up to date. This leaves staff uncertain about specific arrangements for each child. There is no evidence of direct work with children about their wishes in relation to contact. This is particularly important for those children who do not have face-to-face contact because of COVID-19.

This monitoring visit has resulted in a number of new requirements being raised. Senior managers are alert to the shortfalls identified. They had already begun to take remedial action prior to this inspection visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/03/2019	Full	Good

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 registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	15 April 2020
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 the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(vii)) Specifically, ensure that restraint records clearly evidence that the threshold for physical restraint is met, and that incidents of restraint are evaluated by a person who has not been involved in the restraint.	15 April 2020
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	29 January 2021

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; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))	29 January 2021
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1))	31 January 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child’s parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d))	31 January 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	31 January 2021

Recommendations

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

Specifically, the registered manager should follow the organisation's escalation policy when the child's placing local authority does not provide statutory information in a timely manner.

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Specifically, ensure that good-quality records of supervision are maintained, and that staff sign these records to confirm that they are a true representation of the supervision discussion.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1277380

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Matthew Hart

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector

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