

1277380

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties. They may also have learning disabilities and/or mental health disorders.

The home registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

There has been no registered manager since June 2023.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

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 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/11/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

The children living in the home are making progress from their starting points. However, the shortfalls in help and protection and in leadership and management mean the care provided to the children requires improvement to be good.

There are currently three children living in the home. Leaders and managers have made the decision not to welcome any more children into the home. This is until there are enough suitably experienced, permanent staff available to care for more than three children.

Although the children's guide contains helpful information for children, it does not explain what children can do should they wish to make a complaint. This shortfall does not support children to be heard and may compromise their safety and well-being.

The quality of relationships between the staff and the children is good. Staff understand the children's individual needs and preferred methods of communication. The staff enjoy spending time with the children during mealtimes and join the children on a range of activities. This helps the children to build trusting relationships with staff.

The children are in good health. Staff understand the health needs of the children and support them to attend routine health appointments. When children have additional health needs, staff are proactive in contacting the relevant health providers to ensure that these needs are met.

Staff help the children to make progress with their education. The staff have links with the children's schools and work in partnership with them to secure positive outcomes for the children.

The children's individual care plans provide information about the children's needs. They contain clear goals through which the progress of the children can be measured. This helps the children to recognise the progress they are making and supports them to celebrate their achievements.

The home is clean and spacious and provides a safe environment for children to live in. Children are involved in making decisions about the decor of the home, and the staff help the children to personalise the children's bedrooms. The deputy manager and staff have ensured that the sensory room meets the needs of the children living in the home by involving the children in the design of the room and the purchasing of equipment.

The parents and professionals spoken to were positive about the home and the staff and the impact that they have on the children's lives. One parent described the progress that their child is making and said that they are happy with the care that their child is receiving. One professional said that the deputy manager and staff are 'proactive in working with others' to meet children's needs.

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

The processes for safer recruitment are not sufficiently robust. In the case of one former employee, leaders and managers showed a lack of curiosity during the recruitment process when they were made aware of concerning information about the individual's safeguarding practice. The concerns raised were not fully explored by hiring managers at the interview stage, and measures to mitigate potential risks were not put in place before the individual came into the post. Although there was no impact on the children, this shortfall does not prevent unsuitable adults from being recruited and does not keep children safe.

The home's location risk assessment lacks consultation with external professionals and does not include information about local amenities, including places of worship. This does not promote transparency to placing authorities, children and their families and does not support staff to keep children safe in the community.

Staff understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities and understand their roles in keeping children safe. Although there have not been any missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection, staff know what to do should a child go missing from home and what they must do when the child returns home. Staff also understand the whistle-blowing policy.

The children's risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly. They provide important information about each child's known and emerging vulnerabilities and what staff need to do to reduce risk. However, more could be done to review the use of the children's bedroom door alarms with placing social workers, parents and children to ensure that it is appropriate and not an infringement on the children's privacy and freedom of movement within the home.

Children are held as a last resort to keep them and others safe. On the occasions that children are held, records clearly describe how staff have supported the child. Following a hold, the child and staff are provided with debriefs. This feedback allows for reflection, supports learning and helps to restore relationships between the child and the staff.

Children feel safe living in the home. One child gave the home a 'solid eight out of 10' because 'the bottom line is i'm safe'.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been instability in the leadership and management of the home. The registered manager post has been vacant for a significant period of time. Two managers have left the home, and the most recent manager has been suspended. Leaders and managers understand that the characteristics of good leadership and management are not fully embedded, and they have taken action to address this shortfall.

The home is not fully staffed with suitably experienced permanent staff, and bank and agency staff are routinely used. Leaders and managers acknowledge the impact that this has on the continuity of care provided to children, and they have a clear plan in place to recruit to these vacant posts.

External monitoring takes place every month. However, these reports lack consultation with the children living in the home, their parents, professionals and staff. This lack of feedback does not support leaders and managers to understand the impact of their decision-making on the safety and well-being of children and make improvements to the quality of care provided.

Staff enjoy working in the home. They know the children living in the home well and are passionate and committed to making a difference to their lives. Staff are supported to meet the children's needs through relevant training, practice-based supervision, appraisals and team meetings. However, not all staff have a good working knowledge of the therapeutic framework employed by the home. This shortfall means that the home is not delivering care in line with the home's statement of purpose.

Staff understand the current challenges regarding the leadership and management of the home and the sufficiency of staff. They have confidence in the plans in place to remedy these shortfalls and expressed a high level of confidence in the deputy manager.

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
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that when any concerns regarding the fitness of an individual arise during the recruitment process, all necessary steps are taken to explore the suitability of the individual to work with children.	1 April 2024
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—	1 April 2024

there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that all staff have a good understanding and working knowledge of the models of care as stated in the home's statement of purpose.	1 April 2024
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and	1 April 2024

take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child— has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b)(ii))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))	1 April 2024
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) In particular, the registered provider must include in the safer area risk assessment information relating to the local amenities, including places of worship, and it must include consultation with relevant persons such as the police, the child sexual exploitation team and the missing persons officer.	1 April 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that limits on privacy and access are only put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)) and ensure that all decisions to use bedroom door alarms are kept under regular review with parents, relevant professionals and the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: 1277380

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

Shirin Khan, Social Care Inspector

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