

2734721

Registered provider: Rock Housing and Support Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered with Ofsted to provide care for up to four children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The home was registered on 24 November 2023. There is a registered manager in post.

Inspection date: 14 March 2024

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Two children, who are siblings, lived at the home at the time of this inspection. Another child has moved in and on from the home since it was registered. The siblings moved into the home sooner than initially expected. The child already living in the home was not well prepared, even though it was known they were likely to struggle living alongside other children. The child's behaviours escalated when the other two children moved in, which staff could not manage. The child subsequently moved out, and poor care planning contributed to the child experiencing an unplanned move.

Two children have made three allegations against staff who work in the home. On two occasions, staff did not follow safeguarding procedures and delayed sharing information with managers. As a result, the children remained in the care of the staff member they alleged had caused them harm without due consideration of the risk this posed. When the registered manager became aware, she took prompt action. The concern is that staff do not understand and follow procedures designed to protect children. This leaves children at risk of harm.

Staff do not have the skills to manage the children's behaviours and needs. As a result, staff have called the police to come and assist them. This increases the risk of children being criminalised. In addition, strategies to manage children's behaviours are not always well considered. This has led to an escalation in children's behaviour at night time.

Managers and staff have not fully considered all known risks to children and taken steps to manage these risks. For example, information about self-harm risks and suicide has not been shared with all staff. In addition, when incidents happen, not all staff are made aware. Clear guidance was not available to staff to support them in mitigating these risks and to know what to do should a child hurt themselves or attempt to take their own life. Although some action was taken to address this shortfall during the inspection, managers had not fully understood the risks and taken appropriate action to mitigate them.

When staff use restraint to prevent children from hurting themselves, other people or causing serious damage to property, incidents are not always recorded promptly. The monitoring and review of these incidents by managers are poor. The registered manager or authorised person does not always speak with the staff and children involved in these incidents. This does not give those involved the opportunity to reflect on what happened and raise any concerns, should they wish to. In addition, it prevents managers from fully understanding children's experiences and taking action should they identify areas where staff practice needs to improve.

Staff are not meeting all the children's health needs effectively. For example, neither child has attended the dentist or opticians yet. In addition, staff did not know whether one child had attended a specialist medical appointment noted in the child's plans as being required. Children are registered with a local doctor and access emergency health care when required.

There has been significant inconsistency in staffing over a period of time. Changes to the staff team are not providing stability and consistency to children. Actions being taken by managers and staff are not helping to reassure children. For example, children have overheard discussions between managers about staffing issues, and this left them concerned that they may have to move due to staff shortages. Leaders and managers have held discussions with the children's placing authority in relation to staffing, and a plan has been agreed to enable the children to continue living at the home.

Most staff are unqualified and have limited experience of working in a children's home. Although all but one of the staff members have received training specific to their role and to help them meet children's needs, this learning is not embedded into their practice.

Aspects of the home environment are not clean and feel uninviting. Damaged furniture and walls are not promptly replaced or repaired. One child has recently moved to a different bedroom. Staff have not replaced the broken chest of drawers, despite there being some available in a spare room.

Children understand how to raise concerns. One child complained about how their monies were being managed. The registered manager investigated the complaint and wrote a response to the child. However, the figures detailed in the response to the child regarding monies received and spent, as well as the remaining balance, did not add up. Consequently, it is not clear if the child's original concern has been fully explored and resolved.

Some aspects of record-keeping require improvement. For example, staff have not recorded over-the-counter medication administered to the child and up-to-date information was not available to staff following an education planning meeting. These issues had not been identified by the manager through their monitoring.

When children leave the home without permission, staff respond well. As a result, there have been no occasions where children's whereabouts are not known.

Children benefit from accessing a wide range of activities that they enjoy. These experiences enable children to develop their social skills.

The two children living at the home now attend school regularly and are making progress with their learning.

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 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))	30 April 2024
The care planning standard is that children—	30 April 2024

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. (Regulation 14 (1)(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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(h)) This includes ensuring that there are sufficient staff to provide consistent care to children and that the staff receive appropriate training. In addition, ensure that monitoring activity is effective, including ensuring that children's records and plans are kept up to date and that repairs to the environment are carried out quickly.	30 April 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c))	30 April 2024

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)) In particular, ensure that when children struggle to settle at night, strategies used are sensitive to each child's needs.	30 April 2024
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))	30 April 2024
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— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and 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)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	30 April 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records are kept of the administration of all medication. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15).

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2734721

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Rock Housing and Support Services Limited

Registered provider address: 20-22 Wenlock Road, London, N1 7GU

Responsible individual: Mark Easie

Registered manager: Abigail Eldridge

Inspector

Helen Dunn, Social Care Inspector

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