

2737745

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company operates this children's home. The home can provide care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties. There are three children currently living in the home.

The acting manager has been in post since November and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 January and 13 March 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Planning for children to move into the home is poor. Plans do not reflect how staff are able to meet children's needs. Strategies are not identified as to how staff can manage the impact that children's individual needs and behaviours may have on each other. Two children moved into the home within a short timescale of each other. Managers did not consider the compatibility of the children living together, any known risks or take into consideration the time frames for each new child moving into the home. As a result, children have experienced harm from other children living in the home and children have moved on from the home in an unplanned way, and children have moved on from the home within short time frames.

Not all children are enrolled in education. Action has not been taken to escalate concerns or challenge decisions in respect of delays for children accessing education provisions. As a result, some children are not accessing any form of education.

Action has not been taken to ensure that staff have access to up-to-date local authority health plans for children. Feedback from one health professional raised concerns that staff are not able to meet one child's mental health needs. Furthermore, plans are not in place to address children's use of electronic cigarettes.

The home environment provides ample space for children to spend time. They have access to a spacious garden. However, areas of the home are in need of attention. Some children's bedrooms are not maintained to an acceptable standard, and damaged furniture has not been removed or replaced. Action has not been taken to remove litter and broken equipment from the garden.

Staff promote children's interests and hobbies. Staff provide opportunities for children to engage in sports and activities to improve emotional well-being. Achievements are celebrated through positive praise books.

Staff respect children's relationships with those important to them. Family are welcomed to the home to spend time with the children. Staff facilitate arrangements for children to spend time with friends and family in the community.

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

Safeguarding practice in the home is poor. Action has not been taken to manage children's relationships in the home. As a result, risks for children have increased.

Staff do not manage the children's behaviour effectively. During one incident, staff locked themselves in the office to safeguard themselves and the office environment. Strategies are not used to de-escalate incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour in the home. As a result, children were able to cause damage to the home and access the staff office

to remove keys for the home's vehicles during one incident. The lack of effective intervention during this incident means that a child was able to drive the vehicle away from the home placing themselves and other road users at risk of harm

Police assistance has been requested on more than one occasion to manage a child's behaviour. This does not demonstrate that the staff team is able to safely support the child in line with their care plan. This can lead to children being unnecessarily criminalised.

Children's records do not include all known risks. Strategies are not in place to manage all risks for children. Plans do not include clear strategies for staff to follow to support children who are at risk of self-harm.

Staff look for children when they are missing from home. However, staff do not always recognise children's triggers for going missing. Risks for one child who previously lived in the home increased during their time of living here, and they were missing from the home for significant periods of time. This led to the child engaging in criminal activity. Furthermore, poor decision-making by staff has led to children seizing opportunities to go missing when spending time in the community.

Children understand the complaints process. However, when children make complaints regarding staff smoking, they are not always followed up in line with the process, and there is insufficient management oversight to identify any actions taken or any learning. This impacts on the children's ability to trust the adults caring for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There have been changes to the management of the home since the last inspection. The manager does not have a thorough understanding of children who have lived in the home previously and the shortfalls in their care. This limits his ability to address these concerns moving forward.

Since starting in post, the manager recognises that the dynamics among the staff team have led to a negative culture in the home. This was detrimental to the care being provided to the children. A more supportive and reflective culture is now being promoted in the home.

Following serious incidents in the home, senior leaders and managers have undertaken reflective reviews. However, not all lessons learned have been embedded into practice. As a result, children have continued to move into and out of the home in an unplanned way due to their needs not being met.

Management oversight of the care being provided in the home is not effective. Staff do not have access to clear plans and strategies to support children or to manage behaviour effectively. Evaluation of incidents does not always identify shortfalls in staff practice or identify further areas of development or learning. When training needs are identified,

action is not taken to ensure that additional refresher training is undertaken by the whole staff team following serious incidents in the home.

Staff have not had access to regular and consistent supervision. The manager has addressed this since starting in the home. Staff benefit from regular team meetings. This provides them with opportunities to reflect on their practice and the care being provided to the children.

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 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children do not have access to items relating to the home or vehicle security, that action is taken to prevent serious incidents in the home and that children's records include all known risks and clear strategies for staff to follow.	27 April 2025
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	27 April 2025

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; understand the impact that 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)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h)) Specifically, that leaders and managers must ensure that there is oversight of all incidents, that shortfalls in staff practice are identified and addressed, that staff undertake all training that is specific to the children’s needs and that support is in place to provide clear guidance to managers overseeing the home.	
*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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended	27 April 2025

that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)) Specifically, that leaders and managers must ensure that they are able to meet the needs of children moving into the home, that they are aware of children's risks when moving in and that plans are in place to manage any conflicting needs for children living together.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;	8 May 2025

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(xi)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that action is taken to de-escalate incidents of challenging behaviour in the home and that plans are in place to manage children's relationships.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(vii)(viii)(x)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that action is taken to ensure that children have access to education and that concerns are escalated when there are delays in children having access to education provisions.	8 May 2025

The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect.; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(v)(c)(i)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that plans are in place to ensure that the home environment, including children’s bedrooms, are nurturing and comfortable environments and that broken furniture is replaced in a timely manner.	8 May 2025
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))	8 May 2025

Specifically, that leaders and manager ensure that concerns are escalated when local authority documents are not received within reasonable time frames.	
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)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children's records are maintained and updated to reflect up-to-date and accurate information.	8 May 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive regular supervision. The registered person must ensure that staff have the opportunity to consider their professional development as identified in their job descriptions.	8 May 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival. Specifically, the registered person must allow sufficient time to enable children to settle into the home before other children move in. Additionally, ensure that the individual needs of each child living in the home are carefully considered to enable children to have a positive experience of arriving at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.7)

- The registered person should ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. Specifically, where possible, this should be done in a planned way to develop the child's emotional resilience and provide them with a positive move. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

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'.

The inspection started on 15 January 2025.. Inspectors returned on 13 March 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2737745

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

Angeline Clarke, Social Care Inspector
Claire Hobbs, Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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