

SC034851

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care for up to five children. The home's statement of purpose states that care is provided for children between the ages of 11 and 17 years and that most will present with varying degrees of emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered in April 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 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
21/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/07/2019	Full	Good
03/09/2018	Full	Good
02/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's welfare and safety is poorly promoted and protected. They make poor progress in many aspects of their lives.

Two out of the three children living at the home do not attend education and do not have routines that support healthy living. Staff have not been successful in encouraging or motivating children to make positive changes, such as getting up or going to bed at regular times. As a result, children's life outcomes are significantly compromised.

Staff are not effective in helping children to access important medical appointments, for example, attending follow-up appointments at hospital, seeking routine medical advice for arising conditions and attending dental appointments. Staff have no plans to address non-attendance nor are they engaging proactively with children to improve these aspects of their health.

Staff have not established effective boundaries and expectations for children. During the inspection, a child did not attend school and was at the home with a peer from the community. Until raised by inspectors, this behaviour was not responded to effectively by staff.

The manager and staff expressed their repeated inability to monitor effectively or influence children's activities or whereabouts when out of the home. They said they were 'at a loss' to positively influence the children or counteract the negative role models children identified with. The manager and staff are not always supporting children to explore their identity and family history or to develop a positive self-view.

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

At the previous inspection, on 22 and 23 February 2022, a requirement was made in respect of staff planning their work with children to address identified risks. Also, that plans should be reviewed for their effectiveness and that children receive a consistent response from staff when they are missing from home, with regards to staff searching for them.

At this inspection, inspectors found that this requirement had not been met. The risks to children living at this home are not consistently identified or responded to. This poor practice has a significant and negative effect on children's safety, welfare and progress.

Staff have not planned for, or addressed effectively, the risks facing children. Some children are identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation. Despite a serious

incident occurring, staff have not carried out any safety work or put measures in place that might reduce those risks.

Following an incident during the night that involved two children, risk assessments have not been updated. There was no plan as to how staff would prevent reoccurrence of incidents in the future. Arrangements at night to reduce risks to children are weak. Staff rely on hearing the children move about at night to alert them to children being out of their rooms. This is not effective.

Although staff are supported by specialist workers from outside the home, there is no evidence of any plans to demonstrate how staff are working with children to reduce effectively their involvement in criminality and exploitation. There are currently no attempts to monitor their phone and internet use or to carry out visual checks on them when they are out of the home.

Staff do not have measures in place to assure themselves of children's whereabouts, including when they are at risk of being criminally exploited. The use of taxis to bring children home, either from free time or seeing their families, results in staff frequently missing opportunities to gather a greater understanding of where children are or who lives at the addresses they are picked up from.

Staff said they were not clear about taxi use for children and that those arrangements were frequently changed. This has culminated in two restraints, when the request to use taxis was refused by staff. Following these incidents of restraint, suitable debriefs have not taken place.

Some children have voiced fears of visiting certain parts of the area they live in, due to threats from people in the community. This recently culminated in the office window at the home being smashed in the early hours of the morning by a young person from the local area.

Since the last inspection, there have been a significant number of incidents of children going missing from home. Beyond phone calls or texts to children, staff do not have a system for assuring themselves that children are safe. The manager was not clear whether actions resulting from two strategy meetings have been carried out. The required action was to provide greater insight into a child's background and assist staff in working with them. Since these meetings took place, one child has been implicated in further criminal activities.

The records completed by staff in new paperwork systems do not clearly identify staff actions in response to incidents of children going missing from home. For example, the records do not make clear how many times or how staff tried to keep in contact with children, what times these attempts were made, which staff were involved in these actions, whether children were searched for by the staff or which addresses and areas were searched. This does not assure managers that staff are working in a way that safeguards children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are significant shortfalls in the manager's monitoring and review systems to ensure that staff safeguard children. The manager does not ensure that the work of staff has meaningful and measurable impact on children's progress.

At the full inspection, on 22 and 23 February 2022, a requirement was made in respect of regulation 13, in particular that work undertaken with children is proactive, relates to children's plans and goals and is reviewed for its effectiveness. At this inspection, it was found that this requirement had not been met.

The manager does not inspire or lead a culture in the home that ensures that staff are effective in their work with children and that children make progress. When children are identified as not responding to the care offered, the manager was unable to offer inspectors a review of staff practice that would indicate alternative strategies or approaches have been used.

Shortfalls in the quality of care provided in the home have a negative effect on children's welfare and progress. There is no effective management system in place to quality assure the work that staff carry out with children. There has been no comprehensive review, analysis, evaluation, learning or plan to address children's progress or identified risks. This has resulted in a lack of improvement in the quality of care at the home.

Staff have not addressed the risks to children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. The manager has not ensured that staff develop meaningful, measurable and effective plans to effect positive change for children. The manager has failed to ensure that staff plan and review their work to meet children's needs.

The manager has not robustly responded to an incident of children being in each other's rooms overnight. There was a failure by the manager to fully appreciate the risks to children and ensure that staff responded in a proactive way. The manager was unaware that the risk assessment had not been updated. In addition, the manager was unable to explain to inspectors how the staff might prevent reoccurrence of incidents by taking remedial action such as an increase in staffing.

The manager is aware that the newly adopted documents to record children's incidents of going missing from home are not comprehensive. The manager has not taken action to address these shortfalls and his oversight of staff's actions is significantly restricted.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi))	17 July 2022
*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—	7 August 2022

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)(f)(h))	
*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; 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 understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vii))	7 August 2022
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—	7 August 2022

that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the child’s health and well-being needs and options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	
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— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv))	7 August 2022
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))	7 August 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC034851

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale
OL16 1XU

Responsible individual: Julia Hassall

Registered manager: Wayne Gates

Inspectors

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector
Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector

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