

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 owned and run by a local authority. The home is registered to provide care for up to five children.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 2 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2022

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: 8 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/07/2019	Full	Good
03/09/2018	Full	Good
02/10/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

There are three children currently living at the home. However, two of the children are refusing to return following an incident of going missing from home. They are currently staying with family members with permission from the local authority.

Children's progress at the home is variable and progress made by some children is not maintained. One child has no education or training provision identified. Two other children either refuse to attend education or their attendance is extremely low. Staff are not successful in encouraging children to attend.

Although staff promote healthy routines, these efforts are not effective. Staff are unable to maintain children's engagement with the home's routines, activities, expectations and boundaries.

Staff regularly offer a variety of activities that reflect children's expressed interests. However, some children have, over time, reduced their engagement with staff. They are either currently absent or choose to spend time away from the home on a regular basis.

Staff offer children individual time and attention. However, children do not benefit from planned intervention from staff. Although staff offer support and advice to children, this intervention is not measured or reviewed for its impact. One child has been adversely influenced by another child. Staff have not been effective in reducing or preventing this influence.

Staff do not consistently plan or review their means of communication with children with autism spectrum disorder. Sources of specialist support or advice are not considered to better inform staff's work.

It is unclear how staff are working towards supporting children to achieve their goals, such as improving their relationships with family members. For one child, there has not been any work completed by staff in this area of their life.

Staff offer children support to prepare for independence and learn skills they will need in adulthood. This includes helping children to budget an allowance, and to shop and plan meals within this budget.

One child has moved on from the home in a planned way and with support from staff.

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

Since living at the home, one child has benefited from a reduction in incidents of going missing from home. However, staff are not always effective in reducing the risks to some children's welfare. These risks include the effects of drug and alcohol misuse and being involved in harmful relationships.

Staff understand the risks that children may face, and can identify and assess these risks. However, these risk assessments do not result in detailed plans or advice for staff. It is not clear how they should work with children to reduce vulnerabilities. For some children, there is limited evidence that areas of concern, such as around internet safety and appropriate relationships, have been purposefully addressed.

There are clear plans in place for staff to follow when children go missing from home. However, children do not receive a consistent response regarding whether staff search for them. Influencing factors include whether staff on duty can drive, hold appropriate insurance and have a car available.

Staff do not always fully record their actions when there are incidents of children going missing from home. The manager was not aware of this shortfall in recording. Evidence that children's plans had been followed had to be retrieved from the call log on the staff's phone.

There have not been any incidents necessitating staff to call the police to assist in managing children's behaviour. In addition, there have been no incidents requiring children to be physically restrained. Staff have been effective in using de-escalation techniques to avoid such incidents.

Managers respond appropriately to allegations made by children against staff. They ensure that enquiries and investigations are transparent and that other professionals are involved.

The manager regularly reviews sanctions that may be imposed on children by staff. He provides appropriate oversight and evaluates the effectiveness of the sanction.

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

Since the assurance visit, the manager has worked hard to ensure that children are not unnecessarily criminalised due to their behaviour, and that staff use physical intervention only when necessary. Other improvements include staff training in areas such as child exploitation, autism spectrum disorder, substance misuse and self-harm.

The manager takes a varied approach to increasing the staff's knowledge base, for example reinforcing training through quizzes and using film clips to provide

additional learning. He has also worked hard to gather the views of children and professionals.

Staff speak positively about the manager and the organisation he has brought to the home since taking up post. He offers an 'open door policy' whereby staff can seek guidance outside the regular formal support that is provided.

The manager makes use of a suitable framework for monitoring the quality of care given to children. However, there are missed opportunities to better focus the work of staff. For example, there are no clear measurable plans as to how children are to be supported to achieve their outcomes and goals.

The support that is offered to children is not evaluated for its effectiveness and, as a result, areas for improvement are not identified. This is particularly pertinent for children who may have more complex communication needs and those who disengage from staff.

The manager is ambitious to continually improve the care offered to children and recognises some areas for improvement.

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 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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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)(ii)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff plan their work with children to address identified risks. Ensure that these plans are reviewed for their effectiveness, and that, during incidents of going missing from home, children receive a consistent response from staff with regards to staff searching for them.	30 April 2022
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))	31 May 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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) In particular, ensure that work completed with children is proactive, relate to children's plans and goals and is reviewed for its efficacy.	30 April 2022
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— 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; 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)(v)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff communicate with children in an informed way that reflects their additional needs, such as around autism spectrum disorder. Ensure that support	30 April 2022

offered to children to enable them to withdraw from harmful relationships is reviewed and evaluated for its effectiveness.	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff make comprehensive records when children go missing from the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)

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

Responsible individual: Julia Hassall

Registered manager: Wayne Gates

Inspector

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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