

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	24/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC034851
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Number One Riverside, Smith Street, ROCHDALE, Lancashire, OL16 1XU

Responsible individual	Paul Marshall
Registered manager	Vacant Post
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	24/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. There has been no Registered Manager at this home since July 2015. Appropriate interim arrangements were put in place and a permanent manager was appointed in December 2015. The current manager is an experienced social care professional who is suitably qualified and has the necessary skills and experience to undertake the role. The manager has taken appropriate action to address the five requirements and two good practice recommendations made at the last inspection. However, one requirement is repeated and further areas of improvement have been raised at this inspection. This has resulted in a judgement of sustained effectiveness. That said there is clear evidence that the home is making steady steps to improve. For example, the manager has taken action to improve health and safety arrangements in the home. Fire doors have now been fitted and work is underway to re-decorate throughout. This will provide the basis for a more homely and comfortable environment. Overall, there is a mixed picture of how well young people are doing in their education, some young people have done very well while others have not. More positively, there is clear evidence that staff make every effort to encourage young people to engage. They work very closely with education professionals to develop appropriate strategies that improve young people's attendance. However, for some young people the efforts of the staff team have not had a positive impact and attendance levels have steadily declined. Overtime this seriously compromises their future prospects. Placement plans provide a good picture of the young people's needs and staff understand how to implement plans on a day to day basis. However, records do not demonstrate young people's involvement in the care planning process. For example, records do not capture young people's views on how they would like to be cared for and what they hope to achieve. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is in the process of designing a more child-friendly placement plan.	

This will ensure young people feel valued and motivated to work towards their personal goals.

All areas of behaviour management, including physical intervention are well managed. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to overcoming difficult and challenging behaviour. They provide clear, consistent and age appropriate boundaries, which contributes to young people's stability, well-being and safety.

Each young person has an individual risk assessment, which includes a separate absconding plan. They give a good overview of identified behaviours, triggers, warning signs and control measures and provide clear guidance for staff to follow. However, there are some shortfalls in the risk assessment. For example, not all have been reviewed and kept up to date. To date, this has not impacted negatively on the safety of young people. This is because staff know young people well and there is strong communication within the team. That said, these records require some revision to ensure they are accurate.

Investigations into complaints are not robust. On at least one occasion, an external complaint was not sufficiently investigated. The complaints record does not provide sufficient information about the complaint, action taken and the outcome. Records made in this way, lack clarity and do not stand up to scrutiny in an event of a further complaint or investigation.

The manager is an experienced practitioner who has worked in social care for many years. She is child-focused and has a strong commitment to securing ongoing developments to improve the care provided to young people.

Effective arrangements are in place for the supervision, training and appraisal of staff. This ensures that practice remains current in line with legislative frameworks. Staff report that they are well supported in their roles. One staff member said 'I can't praise the manager enough. She is very approachable and is open to ideas from the team.

The Registered Manager has some effective monitoring systems in place that ensure young people enjoy a good standard of care and protection. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and recognises some quality assurance and monitoring processes need to improve. For example, the manager has acknowledged that the views of young people, their parents and professionals have not always been sought and they have not had the opportunity to offer their views on how the service can improve. This shortfall has resulted in a repeated requirement.

More positively, the manager is addressing minor administrative errors in recording through regular auditing and reviewing of documents. Furthermore, there is clear

evidence that action has been taken to address matters identified by the independent visitor. Overall, this demonstrates the home's capacity to develop and improve for the benefit of young people.

The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose, which are to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, the Statement of Purpose has not been updated and requires some revision. These are minor amendments and this shortfall has not had a direct impact on the safety and wellbeing of young people.

Overall the home has made some progress and the manager has acted upon the majority of the previous requirements and recommendations. That said, there are further areas that require attention. Where shortfalls have been identified the manager has accepted responsibility and is focused on developing systems to ensure these are addressed promptly.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/07/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
04/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
17/06/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
31/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that staff - (1)(b) engage with them and (c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care, welfare and their lives. With particular reference to ensuring that young people have a central role in the development and review of their placement plans.	09/05/2016
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	09/05/2016
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	09/05/2016
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (5))	09/05/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

ensure young people are in full-time education while they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan states otherwise. (The Guide, paragraph 5.14, page 28)

Staff should continually and actively assess the risk to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. This specifically relates to ensuring that absconding plans and risk assessments are kept up to date (The Guide page 42, 9.5)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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