

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC034922
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered Provider	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered Provider address	PO Box 39, Rochdale, Lancashire. OL16 1LQ

Responsible Individual	Jill McGegor
Registered Manager	Melanie Ambrose
Inspector	Louise Redfern

Inspection date	20/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC034922

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people say that they feel safe and protected by the staff team. Regular training ensures that staff have a good understanding of safeguarding.
- Good relationships are established between young people and the staff team. This ensures that young people have adults whom they can trust and enjoy spending positive time with in the home and the wider community.
- Young people make good progress living at the home, from their individual starting points. This is because of the high quality of care and support that are provided by the staff team.
- The staff team benefits from a supportive management team. The members of the team say that they are well supported in their roles by the manager, and have regular supervisions and team meetings. They participate in regular training. This ensures that they are equipped to meet the needs of the young people placed in the home.
- Young people's friendships and family support networks are valued and encouraged by the manager and staff team, which builds self-esteem and self-worth.
- The home is managed by a dedicated manager who is passionate about providing a high quality of care to each young person who lives at the home. She is committed to driving forward the quality of care provided by the staff team.
- Areas for the home's development include ensuring that:
 - records are completed to include the effectiveness of any measures of control that are imposed by the staff team
 - reports about the home completed by the independent visitor include their opinion on how well young people are safeguarded in the home
 - monitoring of the home includes the opinions of young people, parents and other professionals in order to drive improvement.

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 '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 registered person must ensure that, within 24 hours of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child at the home, a record is made which includes— any methods used or steps taken to avoid the use of the measure; and the effectiveness and any consequence of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(v)(vii))	11/11/2016
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report', which sets out, in particular, the independent visitor's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 44(4)(a))	11/11/2016
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided and produce a written report at least once every six months. The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(5))	11/11/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Good
05/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/07/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make good progress, because they receive personalised and consistent support from staff whom they know well. They benefit from living in a caring environment where staff treat them with unconditional positive regard. Staff are focused on the individual needs of the young people and are skilled at engaging them. One young person commented: 'It's a good home and some of the staff are really good.' The consistency of the staff team means that young people feel confident and safe with the staff, and enjoy spending time with them. Young people spoke fondly throughout the inspection about individual staff members with whom they share a positive relationship with. The strength of the relationships between young people and staff members has enabled young people to feel confident to explore and experiment with their individual identities. The manager has recognised the need to access external agencies to offer the right level of support and expertise to individual young people and staff in order to meet young people's specific needs. Young people are encouraged to spend time engaging in positive activities, both in the home and local community. During the inspection, young people and staff were observed interacting positively with each other, playing board games. Young people have the opportunity to access a local youth centre which offers time for them to meet friends and engage in positive activities, such as the gym. Young people are placed at the centre of the home by the manager and staff team. Their individual views are integral to the running of the home. Day-to-day conversations, detailed key-worker discussions and formal meetings provide opportunities for young people to share their views and help to bring about change in the home. Young people are supported to be prepared for their individual care planning meetings. This ensures that their views are heard by professionals. Young people's health is generally good. They are all registered with healthcare services and attend routine health appointments. Young people are encouraged to understand the importance of maintaining good health. They are provided with good information and advice about a range of important health matters such as sexual health, smoking and the consequences of substance misuse. Staff recognise and value the importance of education and do their best to promote this. However, there have been mixed levels of success in young people achieving positive outcomes in education, despite the good level of support in place. For example, one young person has successfully transitioned from school to college, but another young person has been reluctant to re-engage in education following	

the summer break. The manager and staff team continue to support, encourage and enable all young people to achieve positive educational outcomes.

Young people benefit from living in a home which is local to their own communities. This means that they can see, where appropriate, family members and friends independently, away from the home. However, family contact can and does take place at the home and in the community, with staff providing direct supervision. This ensures that young people have safe, purposeful contact with the people who are important to them.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop independence skills in preparation for moving on from the home. Young people are adept at travelling independently in the local area. One social worker commented: 'Staff have supported X to be ready to travel to college. They have supported him to take small steps to be make sure that he is prepared for independence.'

Young people live in a house that sits well within the local community. The manager has commenced a refurbishment plan, with the bathrooms recently being updated. The manager has a clear vision for future improvements to the home and has secured funding for this to take place. Young people have been involved in the changes to the decor, which encourages them to have a sense of ownership of the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that the staff team do a good job of keeping them safe in the home, a view which is shared by professionals and parents alike. One parent commented: 'I feel confident that my son is being kept safe in the home; from the day I walked into the home, I felt reassured by the staff.' Individual staff demonstrate unconditional positive regard for young people, who can, on occasion, display extremely challenging behaviour. They understand past trauma and are able to respond effectively to the challenges presented by individual young people. The staff team is very experienced and has considerable skill in managing behaviour. Staff have worked tirelessly to build effective relationships with individual young people to enable them to reflect on their behaviour. All areas of behaviour management are well managed and monitored. Young people and staff have responded positively to the introduction of a new incentive system, which rewards any positive behaviour displayed by the young people. The skill of the staff has meant that, since the last inspection, there have been no physical interventions. This is because they use a number of de-escalation	

techniques to manage and support young people to regulate their own behaviour. However, the current records used to record consequences and any use of physical interventions do not meet regulations. The system does not enable staff to record other measures used to support the young person prior to consequences being imposed by the staff member, neither does the registered manager routinely review the action taken for effectiveness. This constitutes a missed opportunity for staff and young people to learn from the action taken.

Both staff and young people recognise that there have been incidents of bullying in the home. However, it is evident that this behaviour is effectively challenged and is being monitored by the staff team and manager. The issue is regularly discussed in young people's meetings and individual key-work sessions.

Young people are helped and protected, because staff have a good awareness of individual risks. Risk assessments are clear, detailed, updated and shared with young people. This means that both staff and young people are aware of the presenting risks of young people and have a good understanding of the agreed strategies in place to safeguard both the young person and the staff team. Young people are all at different stages of learning how to manage risk and make positive choices to become increasingly safe. Since being in placement, some young people have made considerable progress in reducing their identified risk-taking behaviour, for example stopping their use of cannabis, and engaging in and completing work with the substance misuse agency.

The current group of young people living in the home do not go missing. However, a missing from home protocol and risk assessment are in place for each young person, should this become a presenting behaviour. The staff team have all experienced work with young people who have previously gone missing, and have the skills and knowledge to support young people.

The manager ensures that a range of health and safety checks are completed to assess whether there are any hazards that could pose a risk to young people and staff. Everyone takes part in regular fire drills, and this ensures that young people know how to evacuate the home safely in case of an emergency. These measures contribute to young people living in a safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is managed by a newly registered manager who achieved registration in August 2016. She has a number of years of management experience and is currently undertaking the relevant management qualification. This will underpin her experience and knowledge and meet regulation. The manager is a passionate leader who acts as a positive role model for both staff and young people. She is	

committed to enabling staff to support young people effectively. One member of staff commented: 'the manager is supportive and passionate about getting it right for the young people.'

External monitoring of the home is well established, and identifies areas for improvement. However, the visitor does not comment on whether young people are being effectively safeguarded. The manager makes good use of regular internal monitoring and has a development plan in place which supports her to identify areas of weaknesses and of improvements that have been secured across the home. However, the manager's monitoring report does not provide for the views and opinions of the young people, their parents or the placing authority. This is a missed opportunity to improve further the quality of care provided by the home.

The home is adequately resourced and delivers the services and support outlined in the statement of purpose. The manager ensures that there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet the young people's individual needs. There are currently a number of staff vacancies, and the manager is actively recruiting to fill these posts. The manager acknowledges that these vacancies have put pressure on the existing staff team. However, the team has remained committed and covered any shortfalls in the rota. The manager has also, on occasion, worked some shifts to ensure consistency for young people. The existing staff are a well-established team with a number of years of experience, and all hold the relevant qualification.

Staff are positive about working at the home. They work together well and understand the need for consistency in order for young people to make progress. Consequently, young people are making significant individual progress, a view that parents and professional share. One social worker commented: 'The staff are working really well with X. There's definitely been progress since being in placement.'

Staff are supported in their role through team meetings, effective and regular supervision sessions, and handovers which act as a debriefing on the day's events and share the learning experiences between shifts. This enables staff to have a good understanding of the current issues and behaviour of young people. The staff team benefits from a rolling training programme. The manager is proactive in looking for additional training for staff to ensure that the team has the right skills to meet the individual needs of young people living at the home.

Good-quality relationships are established with parents, family members, placing social workers and external agencies. This means that young people benefit from a holistic support package which strives to ensure that they are safe, make progress and have access to the right levels of support. Parents have commented: 'The staff are very good, communication is excellent and we have an honest relationship with each other. I did have one issue. I spoke to the manager. She was fabulous and dealt with the issue promptly.'

The manager has addressed the actions raised at the previous inspection. Young people are now part of the development of the internal placement plans, and have regular discussions with key staff about the current targets and plans. Individual risk assessments are regularly updated, with the manager reviewing the assessments following any amendments. This means that staff have reviewed and updated strategies in place to support young people. The manager now maintains detailed allegation management records. This evidences the action taken to safeguard young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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