

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	31/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC034922
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	Meg Boustead
Registered manager	Vacant Post
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	31/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection the organisation has successfully appointed a new manager. The new manager is suitably experienced and the registration process is underway. She has detailed knowledge of the young people and a thorough understanding of the home strengths and weaknesses. Since being in post the manager has made progress in addressing the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the admission process. Full consideration is now given to all requests prior to offering a place to a young person, which reduces the risk of placement instability. Where possible transition to the home is planned. This ensures that young people feel better prepared for the move. Staff are also kept fully informed of admissions. Because of this additional knowledge, they are better able to provide a high level of care to the young people from the moment they arrive. The arrangements for protecting young people are sound and ensure that they are cared for safely. Group living presents challenges from time to time, but this is generally well managed by staff. Staff focus on positives and incentive plans and sanctions is not the preferred method of managing behaviour. The use of restorative techniques also helps young people to confront their unacceptable behaviours, take responsibility for these, and reflect on how they can handle future situations more constructively. Good safeguarding arrangements are in place when young people go missing from the home. Staff actively discourage young people from leaving the home through discussion and positive affirmations. As a result, most young people do not place themselves at risk by going missing. There have only been two recorded missing episodes since the last inspection. This demonstrates that young people are making better choices in relation to their personal safety. Placement plans reflect current need and behaviours that underpin day to day responses from staff. However, they do not capture young people's views and opinions. Overall, there is little evidence of young people's contribution to their	

plans alongside social workers and where appropriate, parents or significant people involved in their life. This means that care plans are fragmented and do not capture the wishes and feelings of young people. Likewise there are shortfalls within risk assessments. Risk assessments are individualised and reflect the diverse needs and personalities of each of the young people, but they are not regularly reviewed or updated and lack clarity. This is not good practice and has the potential to undermine agreed strategies to manage risk, but to date, this has not impacted negatively on young people, due to effective communication within the team.

There are clear safeguarding policies and procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation, suspicion of abuse or unsafe practice. Generally, allegations are handled in line with procedure and support both the young person and members of staff involved. Records of allegations are less robust and fail to contain all the relevant information. For example, they do not include sufficient detail of the action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. Records made in this way lack clarity and do not stand up to further scrutiny in the event of a further complaint.

Leaders and managers continue to lead a well-motivated team. The manager ensures that staff have appropriate development opportunities. This enables them to feel confident in their practice. Records confirm that staff receive regular supervision, both formal and informal. Following a recommendation made at the last inspection improvements have been made to the appraisal process. The views of young people, relatives and professionals are now requested and reviewed as part of their continued professional development. This strengthens the manager's ability to critically appraise professional practice and competency.

The home continues to offer young people a good service. This means it has sustained its effectiveness since the last inspection.

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
22/09/2015	CH - Full	Good
05/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
25/07/2014	CH - Full	Good
12/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good 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.	16/05/2016

Recommendations

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

- 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 risk assessments are kept up to date (The Guide page 42, 9.5)
- The home's record of event must include a description of the action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. This specifically relates to allegation management records. (The Guide, page 63 para 14.14)

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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