

SC464809

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number operated by a private provider. It is registered to care for five young people who may have social, emotional or learning needs.

The current manager has managed the home since August 2019. Ofsted has yet to receive a complete application for registration.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 February 2020

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2018	Full	Good
07/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/06/2017	Full	Good
08/02/2017	Full	Requires 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
<p>The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(2)(a))</p>	27/03/2020
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))</p>	27/03/2020

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child’s relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- Ensure that children have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- Ensure that there are suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. (‘Guide to the

children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Ensure that the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from living in a structured environment, with clear boundaries and routines. They know what is expected of them. Young people have good relationships with staff and most young people enjoy spending time with staff. Good staffing levels allow for this. There are some particularly positive relationships between young people and their key workers, which enables sensitive issues to be openly discussed. One young person commented, 'Staff are always there for me. Staff care about me.'

The home is warm and welcoming and decorated to a good standard. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their interests and personalities. One young person has a fish tank and takes full responsibility for feeding and cleaning his fish.

Good-quality placement plans outline young people's needs, routines and contact arrangements. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's histories. However, specific detail does not always tally with other records and agreements; for example, the rules about mobile phone use are unclear.

Not all young people are attending school or college regularly. While staff liaison with other professionals is good and they do encourage young people to participate in education, some young people are not attending full-time or engaging well in education delivered at the home. This will have a negative impact on their chances of employment in the future.

Young people do not have access to a computer currently, as the original device broke several months ago. This is of particular significance because staff could utilise the computer to engage young people in online education or training when they are not in education on a full-time basis.

Young people's health needs are addressed. One young person requires a number of specialist appointments and staff engagement in daily physiotherapy. However, health records do not always contain sufficient detail about appointments attended and the outcome of these. Consequently, information may be lost. The arrangements for the administration of medication are largely sound. However, on one occasion when a young person was prescribed antibiotics, these were not administered as prescribed, as staff had misunderstood the daily dosage. This does not ensure young people's well-being.

Staff support young people to keep in contact with their families. Staff appreciate the significance of these relationships and will ensure that contact takes place, even if this entails travelling long distances. Young people and their families appreciate this.

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

Staff ensure that the home is a safe place to live. Young people are mostly settled in this home, trusting those who care for them. They feel safe and secure here.

Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy about anything. However, there have been no complaints since the last inspection. An independent advocate also visits the home regularly, so that young people are familiar with them. This ensures that young people have easy access to support if they need it, to resolve any issues.

Risk assessments demonstrate that staff assess a range of risks associated with each young person's behaviour. They agree on the most appropriate strategy to adopt to reduce this risk and keep young people safe. However, on occasion, some known risks have been omitted. These include child sexual exploitation and bullying. Although any incidents of bullying are managed quickly and effectively, closer monitoring would help identify any patterns or trends.

Young people's risk-taking behaviours reduce following their admission. Young people rarely go missing from the home. When this does happen, staff are proactive in their responses. They search the local area and report to relevant agencies in a timely manner. Staff work well with other safeguarding agencies.

All staff are trained in behaviour management, including restraint. Staff know young people well, and when there has been a spike in incidents staff can usually understand why. Although the recording of incidents is generally good, sometimes additional detail would help form a clearer picture of the incident.

Young people benefit from weekly incentive charts, which help them to focus on meeting their individual targets. Staff also reward young people's positive responses on an ad-hoc basis. However, these rewards are largely food-based, such as a milkshake or ice-cream, which can conflict with young people's healthy eating plans. Similarly, staff sanction negative behaviour on occasion. However, sanctions do not relate to the incident and could be more restorative in nature, helping young people to appreciate the repercussions of their actions.

Routine health and safety checks in the home ensure young people's safety and well-being. Regular fire drills ensure that young people know what to do in an emergency. However, records do not always include detail of those involved, making it difficult to be confident that everyone in the home has been involved in a recent practice evacuation. There has also been a delay in reviewing and amending a personal emergency evacuation plan for one young person with a physical disability, despite this being raised in a fire risk assessment some months earlier.

Robust staff recruitment ensures that only those who are suitable are employed to work in the home.

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

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. However, the manager's application for registration has been significantly delayed, as she has been in post since August 2019. The manager demonstrates knowledge of both the strengths

and weaknesses of the home and has a clear vision of how to progress and make improvements.

Care planning within the home is effective. The manager and staff show a good understanding of individual young people's needs. However, in the case of one young person, the placement proceeded without the necessary registration conditions being agreed in advance. The staff team has responded effectively to the implications of this, making suitable changes to the layout of the home, but the young person's needs were not within the range of needs set out in the home's statement of purpose.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. However, there is currently a consistent team of motivated and committed staff. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge and they receive appropriate training, supervision and support. However, yearly performance appraisals are not being routinely completed for all staff members, limiting opportunity for reflection and development.

This inspection has identified weaknesses in management monitoring and oversight. If the internal and external monitoring was sufficiently robust, it would have identified several matters highlighted during this inspection. This includes the matters already emphasised in this report, as well as some records requiring the manager's evaluation, and others failing to cross-reference with other records kept in the home. Furthermore, a greater emphasis on embedding equality and diversity into practice in the home would help young people learn about the importance of tolerance and celebrating difference.

External professionals, parents and young people speak highly of the home. One parent commented in a recent Ofsted survey return, 'Staff are compassionate and caring; there is excellent communication and liaison with us.' Furthermore, a social worker commented, 'The atmosphere is homely and friendly. The staff have been very welcoming and supportive.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC464809

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Ltd

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

Suzanne Birchall, social care inspector

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