

SC483692

Registered provider: ROC Northwest Limited

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 four young people who may have social, emotional or learning needs.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 27 July 2020.

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.

The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
28/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
04/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit care that is finely tuned to meet their needs from a committed staff team. One child described the 'good bond' that both staff and children share. Staff have an in-depth understanding of each child's needs and how their past experiences shape these. The staff team has embedded the learning of the therapeutic training in their approach to caring for children. Feedback from one professional working with a child demonstrates the team's approach to practice well: 'They are very warm towards him. [They] care about him and want the best for him.'

Children's health needs are very well supported by staff. Children are helped to regularly engage in physical exercise together with staff. Staff support children to access specialist health services alongside the in-house therapeutic support provided. Staff benefit from very good quality consultations with the therapist. Children benefit from staff having a sound understanding of how past trauma can be communicated through children's individual behaviours.

Staff persistently promote the value of learning. The members of the team have developed collaborative relationships with education and training providers. Children progress well overall in their education and training as a result. However, staff understand children can struggle to engage in learning, depending on their previous experiences. This has been recognised for one child, with tenacious support provided by the team. It is recommended that all learning options be explored, with the child, by the staff team. One professional provided excellent feedback regarding the educational progress another child has made since coming to live at the home.

Children's needs are sensitively considered at point of referral, with additional support put in place. Staff are empathic and demonstrate a real commitment to supporting each child in developing their own sense of identity. Staff are child-centred in their approach to providing care, and they actively support children to spend quality time with their family. This is a particular strength of the staff team. For example, staff go over and above to regularly support children's family time, including organising activities for the family to engage in together. This has helped to promote children's enduring familial relationships, which are important to their sense of self.

Staff support children to take part in an extensive range of activities. Children are helped to actively contribute to their community in meaningful ways. There were some inspirational examples of this over the last year, including buying Christmas presents for local children, fundraising events, writing kindness cards to residents in a care home, and making donations to a local food bank and homeless charity. Children have developed in confidence and self-esteem, and, importantly, they can see how they have made a positive difference to the local community.

Children's views are enthusiastically sought by the team. Staff listen to children and act on what they say. This includes children helping to shape the expectations of the home. Children know how to access independent advocacy and how to make a complaint. The home's promotion of the new online consultation tool is an excellent example of promoting the voice of the child. This further provides children with an alternative route to sharing feedback directly with the management team.

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

Staff have a thorough understanding of each child's vulnerabilities and identified risks. The individual risk management plans provide staff with effective strategies to address these risks. Through a sound understanding of risks posed outside of the home, the staff team consistently work together, to safely manage children's time away from the home.

There is an effective response to children who go missing from the home. Staff persistently search for children at all known potential areas locally and, where appropriate, travel significant distances to locate children both during day and night-time. This child-centred approach to safeguarding children is equally evident in the bespoke direct work staff undertake with children. This includes notable examples of support provided to help children understand the risks of knife crime, gang affiliation and child criminal exploitation.

Children are supported to reflect with staff when they have struggled to manage their behaviours. Staff use creative approaches to help children to find safe ways to manage difficult feelings. There is a striking example of where the individual support provided to a child has made a significant difference to both their behaviour and emotional well-being. This has contributed to their exceptional progress over time.

The small number of allegations against staff have been appropriately investigated, resulting in no further action following consultation with the designated officer.

The registered manager is resolute in their commitment to safeguarding the children in their care. They are tenacious in appropriately raising concerns they identify outside of the home. There are particularly robust examples of this in relation to excellent partnership working with statutory agencies. Through attendance at regular safeguarding meetings, the registered manager acts as a strong advocate for children, consistently contributing to the multi-agency risk management plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is dedicated and empathic, with a focus on excellent practice within the home. They have a comprehensive understanding of each child's support plans. Through extensive monitoring and oversight of these, the registered manager can continually evaluate the positive progress made. They lead by example, with an exemplary child-centred approach, as demonstrated across the

team. This is based on the home's therapeutic approach, which is evident in their own practice.

The committed deputy manager is attuned to the needs of the children. They provide constant support and, together with the registered manager, make a strong management team. They both role model exceptional quality of care based on open and trusting relationships with the children and the whole staff team. A significant example of this was during the two periods where it was necessary for children and staff to self-isolate due to COVID-19. Both the registered manager and the deputy manager isolated for a week at a time in the home. They were supported by equally committed members of staff, including both team leaders.

Staff appreciate the unswerving support of the management team. All staff shared consistently outstanding feedback on both the management support and the culture of the home. The feedback from one staff member encapsulated this, commenting, '[The] management team are so supportive and will go above and beyond for all staff and young people.' Staff feel valued and recognise how the care they provide helps children to thrive.

Staff benefit from regular time and space to reflect on their own practice, both individually and as a team. However, there are differences in how often staff receive individual supervision, due to the recent changes in organisational policy. It is recommended that there is consistency in the frequency of supervision provided across the team. The training and induction programme for staff is comprehensive. The management team regularly identifies new learning opportunities for staff, which helps them to effectively meet the changing needs of the children.

The registered manager is innovative in their own professional practice. This is enthusiastically supported by the senior management team, including sharing outstanding examples of research-informed practice across the organisation. The registered manager is undertaking teacher training in specialist behaviour support, with the plan to be the organisational lead for this. They are the national lead, for the on-line consultation tool, which they train fellow managers in the application of.

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

- The registered provider should, in collaboration with the relevant professionals, ensure that young people not in education or training post 16 are helped to explore all learning options available to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.16)
- The registered provider should ensure that the frequency of staff supervision is consistent across the staff team. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC483692

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ROC Northwest Limited

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

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Dorothy Clark

Inspector

Maria Lonergan, Social Care Inspector

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