

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC483688
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Roc Northwest Ltd
Registered provider address	Roc Northwest Ltd, 41 Silverdale Road, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 0AL

Responsible individual	Katie Stephens
Registered manager	Post vacant
Lead inspector	Marie Cordingley
Team inspector	Mandy Williams

Inspection date	20/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC483688

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Children's and young people's individual risk assessments do not always include all the relevant information and are not always updated in accordance with new information.
- Safeguarding procedures are not always followed correctly in terms of the people allocated to carry out internal investigations.
- Risks to the health, safety and well-being of children and young people are not always identified or managed well. Avoidable risks, such as those relating to the environment, are not always addressed.
- Managers and staff are not fully aware of the contents of the home's statement of purpose and, as such, are not able to demonstrate that they are working in accordance with it.
- A more proactive approach is required by the manager to ensure that the rights and needs of young people are championed when they are not receiving adequate support from external agencies.
- Managers have not always ensured that the needs of children and young people are carefully considered or that impact risk assessments are used in an effective way when considering the admission of young people to the home.
- High staff turnover has resulted in large numbers of staff from other services supporting children and young people at the home.
- Staff do not always respond to the views or questions of children and young people in a prompt manner.

The children's home strengths

- Children, young people, parents and external professionals report satisfaction with the service provided at the home. Staff have a good understanding of children's and young people's needs and the support that they require.
- Children and young people are supported to achieve and make demonstrable progress in many areas. They are safer, because of the support that they receive.
- People feel that staff at the home communicate with them in a positive and effective manner. Comments that we received include, 'I am free to ring at any time. I find them very helpful' and 'I find the staff very responsive and knowledgeable about all the young people'.
- Children and young people develop positive relationships with staff, and feel safe and secure through being supported by them.
- Staff are provided with appropriate training. This helps to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide safe, effective care to children and young people.
- Staff receive regular supervision and feel well supported on a day-to-day basis. They describe managers as approachable, and feel able to express their views and raise concerns.
- There is a clear management structure in place and good support networks have been established for the new manager. Managers are receptive to feedback and demonstrate commitment to improvement when areas for development are identified.

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
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to a child;</p> <p>(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</p>	28/10/2016
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>(2)(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health.</p>	07/10/2016
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure—</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies.</p>	28/10/2016
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children’s needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>(b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each</p>	28/10/2016

<p>child's needs; (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p>	
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must— (2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose.</p>	<p>28/10/2016</p>

Recommendations

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

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31(1)) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate up to seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities. The home provides accommodation for up to five young people in the main building and two young people in a separate annex. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/05/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>Children and young people receive good-quality, individualised care and, as a result, experience positive outcomes. Many examples of significant progress made by children and young people are evident. One young person told us, 'If it wasn't for this place, I don't know where I would be. I've achieved so much here and I know I can do more.' An independent reviewing officer commented, 'The young person whom I review has come on in leaps and bounds and is more independent than anyone imagined possible.' A family member said, 'X hasn't yet been at the home for a long time, but I am impressed so far. They seem to really understand him.'</p> <p>One young person has progressed since his admission to such an extent that medical professionals have been able to reduce his medication. Another young person, who struggled to interact with others, has progressed to taking part in activities with other children and young people and eating meals with staff. These achievements are demonstrably linked to the care and support that they have received at the home.</p> <p>Children and young people describe valued relationships with staff. One young person said, 'They are never too busy for me. If they are on the telephone and I need to talk to them, they would stop and talk to me instead.' A social worker commented, 'Staff are very supportive of young people and advocate for them.' One young person described how they had felt compelled to 'push staff away' when they first came to the home. They said, 'No matter how far I pushed them, they were still there for me. I've never known that before. In the end, I didn't need to push anymore.'</p> <p>Despite this very positive feedback, the home has experienced a high turnover of staff in recent months. This has led to large numbers of staff from other services working shifts at the home. Staff rotas show that in one six-week period, 16 staff members who are not permanently employed at the home had worked shifts there. Some young people commented on this, but reported an improving picture. One young person said, 'It was hard when there were lots of different staff. They didn't know me, so I couldn't be bothered with them.'</p> <p>Children and young people enjoy good experiences on a day-to-day basis. Staff support them to engage in hobbies and activities that they like, as well as to try new ones. Children and young people regularly engage in activities such as ice skating, dance classes and horse riding. Staff have supported one young person to make arrangements for a part loan of a horse and take on the responsibility of</p>	

some aspects of the horse's care.

A strong emphasis on supporting children and young people helps them to achieve. Staff encourage them to set goals and targets and recognise, celebrate and reward their progress. This helps children and young people to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

The majority of children and young people have clear education plans in place and are making good progress in this area. One young person has recently completed their schooling and has embarked on a college course, which they told us they were enjoying very much. However, another young person currently has no education or vocational training in place. The manager of the home has pursued this, yet could follow the issue up in a more robust manner, which would help to ensure that the young person had suitable support to develop their skills.

Children's and young people's meetings take place on a regular basis, when various items are discussed. Staff invite children and young people to express their views, but the issues that they raise are not always followed up promptly. For example, one young person had raised a concern about a problem with their window but, several weeks on, there was no evidence that this had been addressed. Another young person had requested an update on a personal matter for several weeks during their key-worker sessions, without receiving one. This demonstrates that the views of children and young people are not always taken into account or followed up in a prompt manner.

Staff support children and young people to maintain contact with their families, and family members report good levels of communication from the home. One relative commented, 'They keep me updated about everything and I know I can phone at any time.' Support has been provided for one young person to access a counselling service to assist them in coming to terms with difficulties in maintaining contact with their family. The manager of the home instigated this, which demonstrates that children's and young people's emotional well-being is supported.

External advocacy services visit the home on a regular basis and engage with the children and young people. Following incidents of behaviour management, staff encourage children and young people to speak with an advocate to help to ensure that they have the opportunity to raise any concerns. Access to external advocates further protects the safety and well-being of children and young people.

Some young people who live at the home are due to move on, because of their age. Transition plans are not in place for all of these young people. In particular, one young person was found to be without a transition plan, despite being due to move to adult services at any time. The manager advised that the absence of a transition plan was being pursued with external professionals. Some work is ongoing with this young person in relation to budgeting, menu planning and meal preparation, but the absence of a transition plan means that the young person may

not receive all the support that they require to move on in a successful manner.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Support provided to children and young people helps to keep them safe and reduces risks to their safety and well-being. There is a demonstrable reduction in most children’s and young people’s high-risk behaviours from the point of their admission.</p> <p>The quality of risk assessment is variable. In some cases children and young people’s risk assessments neither fully reflect changes in their circumstances nor are updated to reflect new information. For example, one young person’s ‘missing from home’ risk assessment did not include important details about contacts that they might make if they went missing. Aspects of another young person’s behaviour were missing from some of their individual risk assessments. This means that staff may not have all the information required to maintain children’s and young people’s safety.</p> <p>Incidents of children or young people being missing from this home are rare. When such incidents do occur, staff respond in a robust manner by actively searching for them and ensure that they are provided with adequate support on their return. Records demonstrate that the appropriate agencies are notified about any missing children or young people in a timely manner. This helps to ensure that a well-coordinated plan is in place to maintain the child’s or young person’s safety.</p> <p>Clear arrangements to safeguard children and young people are in place, and any safeguarding concerns are immediately shared with the relevant agencies. Staff are provided with training in safeguarding and demonstrate good understanding of their responsibilities to protect children and young people from harm. One staff member commented, ‘I wouldn’t think twice about raising any concerns. I am there to protect the young people. That is my main concern.’</p> <p>However, on one recent occasion, a failure to follow the correct safeguarding procedures occurred. This resulted in an allegation being referred to a staff member to investigate, which was not in accordance with the service’s own scheme of delegation. This potentially compromised the integrity of the investigation.</p> <p>Children and young people report that they feel safe living at this home. One young person commented, ‘I know that they [the staff] will always look out for us, no matter what.’ One young person was recently supported by staff to make a formal complaint, demonstrating that staff support young people to raise concerns.</p> <p>Staff manage children’s and young people’s behaviours well and support them in a</p>	

manner that helps them to develop skills in regulating their own behaviour in times of difficulty. Staff consistently promote positive behaviour through the use of clear targets and rewards, which gives children and young people a sense of achievement and helps them to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Incidents resulting in physical intervention are clearly recorded and carefully reviewed. This effective monitoring helps to protect the safety and well-being of children and young people, and helps staff to identify any measures that can be taken to avoid similar incidents occurring in the future.

A clear process is in place to issue sanctions to children and young people to assist them in developing their understanding of boundaries and consequences. The manager reviews and analyses all sanctions issued to ensure that they are both fair and effective.

Staff working with children and young people are carefully recruited. Managers follow robust recruitment procedures, which include a number of background checks of prospective employees. This reduces the risk of children and young people being cared for by people of unsuitable character.

Processes to assess and manage environmental risk require improvement. A number of easily identifiable and avoidable hazards were noted by the inspectors. These included easy access to a potentially harmful chemical, poor food hygiene practice and the unsafe storage of medication, which create unnecessary risks to the safety of children and young people. In addition, some areas of the home, in particular bathrooms and toilets, were found to be visibly unclean, so children and young people were not always protected from the risks of poor hygiene or infection.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>There is a newly appointed manager in place who is currently going through the process of registration. He is due to commence further leadership and management training. A robust support network has been implemented for the manager during his probationary period, which includes input from a registered manager of another service and enhanced supervision from a senior manager.</p> <p>The home is not currently working in accordance with its own statement of purpose. The home's statement of purpose indicates that children or young people with a physical disability may be placed there. This is not accurate and demonstrates that managers and staff are not fully aware of the contents of the statement of purpose. Similarly, the home is currently failing to operate in accordance with conditions of its registration, as it is accommodating two young</p>	

people who have reached the age of 18.

Managers are able to demonstrate that children and young people make good progress at this home. Positive outcomes for a number of young people are evident and attributable to the support that they have received. A social worker commented, 'I have been very happy with the service provided. X has settled much better than had been anticipated, which I put largely down to the support provided.'

However, this good practice is not always supported by clear recording. Some records relating to young people require more clarity or are in need of updating. For example, the placement plan of one young person referred to a school that they had not attended for several months and made no mention of their recent college attendance.

Most external professionals report good communication from the home. Comments from social workers included: 'Communication is excellent. The young person appears to be at the centre of all planning.' However, in some cases, there has been a failure to work in a proactive manner with other agencies or to challenge external services that are not providing adequate support to children and young people. For example, one young person currently has no clear plan in place for moving on from the home, despite him being of an age when this is required. While the manager was able to evidence some attempts to pursue this issue, it could have been followed up in a more robust manner.

There is evidence that the safety and stability of young people have not always been taken into account when considering new admissions. Impact risk assessments are not always carried out in an effective manner. This recently resulted in the admission of a young person without full consideration to the significant risks relating to their behaviour. Children and young people living at the home were affected by this failure. One young person described the situation as 'horrible' and recalled being afraid to come out of their bedroom, at times.

Managers describe lessons learned from this incident and advise that more robust impact risk assessments are now carried out when considering new admissions to the home. A social worker supported this information when describing the recent admission of one young person to the home. They commented, 'The transition prepared for X was excellent and certainly helped him to become accustomed to life on the unit before joining it.'

Staff describe a supportive environment within which they feel able to share their views and raise concerns. Staff describe managers as approachable and supportive. One staff member commented, 'Management is very supportive towards staff and the young people. Staff are there any time, day or night, to contact.' Another said, 'There is plenty of consultation to improve and move forward.' Staff receive regular supervision, which gives them opportunity to discuss any

concerns they have, training and personal development. Staff report that supervision is a helpful process which assists them in developing their skills and confidence in supporting the children and young people.

A positive approach to training helps to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide safe, effective care to children and young people. A detailed training programme is in place, which includes a number of mandatory subjects such as safeguarding and positive behaviour management. Managers carefully monitor staff training to ensure that all updates and refresher training are provided within the appropriate timescales. One staff member, who has recently joined the home, was very complimentary about the support and induction that they had received at the start of their employment. They said, 'My induction was brilliant. I felt very well supported.' This means that children and young people receive support from well-trained staff.

There are systems in place to monitor the quality and safety of the service provided at the home. These include monthly visits by an external professional, during which various aspects of the service are assessed and recommendations for improvement are made, where appropriate. The manager was able to give us a number of examples of actions taken in response to the reports, demonstrating that issues are acted upon when raised.

A recommendation was made during the last inspection that the processes of risk assessment were improved. This recommendation has not been addressed and is now raised as a requirement. Five requirements and three recommendations have been raised at this inspection to support further improvement going forward. This also highlights the need to improve internal monitoring processes further, so that the manager is able to identify areas for improvement in a timely fashion, independent of external scrutiny.

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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