

1237582

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The service is run by a local authority. The home may provide care and accommodation for no more than five children.

The overall aim of the service is to provide short-break care for children and young people who need a 'break' away from their normal living environment.

The registered manager has the relevant experience and qualification for his post.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 August 2018

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 18 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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18/09/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>36: Children's case records</p> <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed by the author of each entry.</p> <p>Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c)</p>	21/09/2018

Recommendations

- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, services and outreach support have been and continue to be provided for 23 children and young people, and their families or carers. There are currently 15 children and young people using the short-break accommodation. Each Friday through to Monday planned arrangements are in place for no more than five children and young people to stay in the home.

During this time, the children and young people receive targeted behavioural support from the staff. Reflection time is used to strengthen the children and young people's relationships with their families or carers. Equally, the outreach work provided by the

staff when the short-break service is not operational enables the children and young people and their families or carers to stay together.

The short-break service also takes crisis placements. At the time of this inspection, a child had been placed in the home because of a family breakdown. The procedures applied in any such case ensure that the management team and the staff team have time to plan effectively. This was confirmed by the young person, his next placement and the staff. The duration of any crisis placement never exceeds 17 days. This is in line with the objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose and the children's homes regulations.

The children and young people receive good-quality care and support from well-trained, qualified and committed staff. The management team and the staff team are skilled in developing positive and trusting relationships with the children and young people, and their families or carers. The management and the staff team have a good understanding of the children and young people's individual needs, and their likes and dislikes.

Staff work well together with parents, carers, schools and healthcare professionals to ensure that the children and young people receive good continuity of care. Positive feedback received clearly shows that the children and young people are happy when in the home. It is evident from the thank-you cards displayed in the home that parents, carers and professionals acknowledge the work that the staff carry out and the progress that the children and young people make.

The children and young people can meet friends and have fun and they form long-lasting relationships. For example, planning for the school summer holidays has ensured that activities are enjoyed by the children and young people who are well-matched with each other. There are good arrangements in place through which the children and young people and their families or carers can voice their views and opinions; the staff take these seriously and act upon them.

Since the last inspection, new carpets and windows have been fitted. Quotes are being considered for the refurbishment of the kitchen area.

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

The management team and the staff team apply an effective safeguarding plan. The children and young people's risk assessments and risk management processes are of the highest quality. Staff are trained in safeguarding issues and have well-developed specialist knowledge. They demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding, particularly in relation to the risks and issues around child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, forced marriage, domestic violence, bullying, missing children and young people, and safe internet and mobile-phone usage. This enables all the staff to plan for, review and ultimately reduce these risks for the children and young people. As a result, none of the children or young people are subjected to child exploitation.

The management team and the staff team are intuitive. They know the children and young people and their families or carers well. They identify potential risks and triggers. Plans to reduce these risks are detailed, highly effective and successful in keeping the children and young people and their families and carers together. These arrangements mean there is a substantial reduction in children and young people being permanently accommodated away from their families or carers.

Due to the exceptional diligence of the whole staff team, children and young people rarely go missing. This is a highly significant improvement, given the behaviours that they displayed before they became involved with the service. Over time, the children and young people are encouraged and supported to modify their behaviours and their attitudes to rules and boundaries. Restraint or consequences are not used in the short-break service. The children and young people's behaviours and attitudes are managed well through plans, consents and contracts that are agreed with their families or carers.

The children and young people spend time in the community. The staff encourage them to use public transport and make use of their mobile phones and social media in a responsible way.

The management team ensures that there are appropriate arrangements in place for the health and safety of the children, young people, staff and visitors. They delegate the application of these arrangements to staff members, and oversee their implementation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager joined the service in March 2017. He is qualified and has a wealth of experience in managing other local authority services for children and young people. He has the support of a qualified assistant manager who knows the short-break service well. Together, they know the home's strengths and areas for improvement, and are inspirational and assertive leaders. They provide effective support for the staff.

Managers lead by example. They spend considerable periods of time engaged with the children and young people and their families or carers, while remaining focused upon their management responsibilities. All staff are extremely positive about the style of management in the home. Staff feel supported and valued.

The members of the staff team are very suitably qualified to work in the home. Staff are extremely well supported through training, supervision and appraisal, and are well informed and focused on their roles. They provide the children and young people with consistency and staff vacancies are rare. Staff recruitment procedures are thorough in order to ensure that only suitable persons are employed at the home..

Dedicated family support workers are accompanied by childcare workers when carrying out assessments and outreach work with the children and young people and their families or carers. Detailed reports about these visits are written, and plans reviewed as part of this process.

There continues to be clear evidence of the positive progress of children and young people within the registered manager's short-break operating report. The registered manager has good systems in place for monitoring and reviewing data on a regular basis. These arrangements will contribute to the next short-break operating report, which is due in October 2018.

For those children and young people using the short-break service, their case files identify specific areas of work and progress for the children and young people to achieve. These are regularly reviewed. However, some of the areas of work and progress recorded in these files are not clear or measurable. Also, where children and young people have entered the service in crisis or an emergency, no case records are maintained. This is inconsistent practice and lessens any opportunities to record good pieces of work which will be relevant for any child or young person's return home or a move to an alternative placement. As a result, a requirement is made.

The recording of children and young people's experiences at the home is work in progress. This was a recommendation at the last inspection and is recommended again at this inspection. This is because staff should understand their important role in encouraging the children and young people to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events.

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: 1237582

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale OL16 1XU

Responsible individual: Jill McGregor

Registered manager: Mark Ford

Inspector

Mark Kersh: social care inspector

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