

1237582

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. The home may provide care and accommodation for up to six children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home uses the 'No Wrong Door' model and also offers outreach support. At the time of the visit, three children were living at the home, one of whom was staying with family as part of his transition to return home.

The manager has recently submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 20 January 2021

This monitoring visit

This home was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2020 before the No Wrong Door model was introduced. Since this time, there have been a number of notifications received regarding children going missing from home and police involvement. The inspector visited the home and was able to speak to a child and professionals.

The home has been issued with a restriction notice following this visit. This means that no other children can move in to the home until steps are taken to keep the children living there safe. Staff do not currently have the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that children are safe and engage in their plans. One child described the home as a 'doss house'.

Staff have been supporting one child in their transition back to their mother's care. Staff deliver medication to the child and complete welfare checks daily. The manager accepted that outreach work with other children has been limited due to the number of available staff and the need to prioritise the children already placed in the home.

The manager has recently submitted an application to register with Ofsted. He has experience of the implementation of the No Wrong Door model and has clear plans for the home. However, progress has been limited. Difficulties staffing the model and

delayed building works due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic have increased the problems.

Children have moved in to the home without clear plans being in place. One young person moved from her previous home by secure escort without being given any notice that she was being moved. She told the inspector that she did not understand why she had been moved from her previous home and wanted to return there as 'it was more like a family'.

Children at risk of exploitation are regularly missing from home for lengthy periods of time. One child has only spent two nights in the home during January 2021. Although steps have been taken to work with other agencies and share information, staff have not been proactive in engaging children or taking appropriate steps to prevent them from going missing from home.

Risk management plans do not include clear strategies for staff to follow in order to prevent children from going missing from home. The risk levels highlighted are also misleading. For example, in one risk assessment, both zero and nine have been highlighted as the level of risk. The staff's response to missing-from-home incidents has been inconsistent and often insufficient. As a result, children's whereabouts have regularly been unknown.

There is little challenge when the children leave the home without authorisation. The inspector saw one child leave the home at 11.00am on the day of the visit. She had refused to engage in education and was going to see her family. Staff gave conflicting information about the contact plan in place and whether this was to be supervised or not. She had been missing for six days and only returned the day before the visit. No staff member was seen following her to encourage her to return to the home and engage in education or an activity. Managers did not notify Ofsted of the missing-from-home incident, which was serious due to its length and additional risk factors.

One young person who is at risk of child sexual exploitation has shown staff significant amounts of money that she has gained when away from the home, further increasing the concerns about her safety. The local exploitation and sexual health teams are involved and regular strategy meetings take place. However, the risks remain the same.

Allegations have not routinely been followed up or reported in line with procedure. One child stated that she did not want to return to the home due to being physically assaulted. Staff recorded that the police had advised the home to look into the allegations in order to safeguard the children. This allegation was not effectively managed.

Staff do not implement clear routines and boundaries. As a result, one child who does not engage in education spends most of her time out in the community with friends and is at risk of exploitation. Staff do not understand their role in

implementing boundaries and reviewing plans that are ineffective to keep children more safe.

Children's bedrooms are not routinely cleaned and tidied. Staff had not tidied the children's bedrooms even though children were missing for lengthy periods of time prior to the visit. As a result, the children returned to a chaotic environment. This lack of basic care is likely to be a contributing factor to the lack of investment from children in the plans for their care.

Additional concerns identified in the bedrooms included a broken bed, exposed wires from a hanging socket and the fact that children regularly smoke in their bedrooms. These concerns, together with incidents when children have set fire to items in the home, increase the risk of further fires in the home. Staff have encouraged children to engage in support with substance misuse groups. However, they have declined.

When children are missing from home, risk management plans state that staff need to search for children in local and known areas that they frequent. However, reports did not evidence that this is done routinely. Comments from staff, a social worker and a parent evidenced that the care of the children is affected by the number of drivers available at the home. On one occasion, two children requested to be collected after being missing for five days. A member of staff recorded that this was not possible due to there being no transport available. The children remained missing and at risk of harm until the following day. This fails to safeguard them or help build positive relationships so that children feel they can trust staff to keep them safe.

Managers have failed to assess the effect of children moving in to the home. Staff have not received adequate training to meet the complex needs of the children placed. As a result, children have colluded in a number of incidents and been unsafe together while in and out of the home.

Progress has been made with the recruitment of the specialists supporting the team. Health plans are detailed and include information about attachment and speech and language needs. However, further work is needed to embed this informed practice into the day-to-day care. One social worker said, 'It is a lot more stable than it has been since October. Nothing is being done in terms of mental health, not yet anyway.'

Independent visits take place monthly but reports did not always meet regulation. However, the manager had already identified this and the most recent report included feedback and the opinion of the visitor as to whether the home kept children safe and promoted their well-being.

Following this visit, a compliance notice has been issued. Inspectors will return to monitor the home to ensure that the restriction notice has been adhered to and to review the progress against the compliance notice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2020	Full	Good
20/08/2018	Full	Good
18/09/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Full	Good

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, the 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff 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 the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vii)(b))</p>	19 February 2021

<p>This particularly relates to staff being proactive in keeping young people safe. Staff need to follow risk management plans when young people leave the home without authorisation and when allegations are made.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii))</p> <p>This particularly relates to implementing clear expectations and routines, and supporting children’s education when they refuse to go to school.</p>	<p>13 March 2021</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p>	<p>13 March 2021</p>

<p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to managers leading a proactive, responsive and nurturing culture in the home.</p> <p>This also relates to managers ensuring that staff have the skills and knowledge to work with the children placed to meet their needs.</p> <p>Managers must ensure that the welfare of children is not affected by the lack of drivers working in the home.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p>	<p>13 March 2021</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed;</p> <p>that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child’s parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i))</p> <p>This particularly relates to managers carefully reviewing staff’s skills and the potential impact when children move in to the home prior to making a decision of suitability. Managers should carefully plan to ensure that young people are prepared for moves in to and from the home.</p> <p>This also relates to staff having a clear understanding of the current supervision arrangements for children meeting with family.</p>	
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home—</p> <p>paragraph (1) does not apply; and</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2))</p> <p>The relates specifically to preventing children from smoking in their bedrooms, completing maintenance work urgently when it increases the risk of fire and ensuring that children’s bedrooms are free from fire hazards.</p>	19 February 2021
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p>	19 February 2021

<p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(e))</p> <p>The relates specifically to informing Ofsted when children at risk of exploitation are missing for lengthy periods of time.</p>	
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to staff ensuring that children have a bedroom that is kept clean and tidy. When children are unable to achieve this themselves, staff need to do this for them.</p>	<p>13 March 2021</p>

*This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is proactive in clarifying if return home interviews have taken place and that any responses, views and feelings from young people involved in the interview are recorded clearly on records in the home. This is to ensure that risk assessments and strategies can be updated in the home, to enable staff to help safeguard young people and prevent them from going missing from home in the future. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30) This is a repeat recommendation.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1237582

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Julia Hassall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

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