

2571902

Registered provider: ROC Family Support Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to two children with emotional and social needs.

The manager was appointed in May 2022. She is suitably qualified and registered with Ofsted on 5 August 2022.

The inspector spoke with one of the two children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides children with stability and nurturing care, which helps them to make good progress. For some children, their progress is significant and this has resulted in positive changes to their lives. When staff are worried about a child or the progress that they make, the staff persistently try different strategies to support the child. When required, the manager liaises with relevant agencies appropriately and she is a strong advocate for the children. This ensures that the children receive the support and services that they require.

Children's moves into the home are well planned. The manager gathers relevant information before the child's move; she meets the child and consults with their previous carers and other relevant professionals. Using this information, she personalises the child's room and ensures that the staff receive the necessary training to meet the child's needs. Children also visit the home and join in activities. This helps them to prepare for their move and settle into the home quickly.

Children are encouraged to attend local groups and try new activities. The staff support the children to follow their individual interests and hobbies. This includes children continuing to attend clubs, which they joined before moving to the home. This helps the children to develop their friendships and increase their self-confidence.

The staff have a good understanding of the children's complex needs. The staff keep good written records and share important information with relevant professionals. When necessary, the staff make referrals to specialist services and seek out expert advice. When children do not want to participate in this support, the staff are persistent. The staff engage with the specialists, on behalf of children, to increase their knowledge and find a route to help the child.

Children are supported to make progress in their education. Regular communication between the staff in the home and the teachers help them all to understand the children's experiences and ensures that the children receive consistent care. The staff encourage learning at home, such as schoolwork and reading. When children do not make progress, barriers to learning are understood. The staff liaise with school professionals and find new strategies to improve the child's participation.

Children's views are considered, and their feedback is acted on by staff. Children are encouraged to speak about matters that affect them, and also children looked after as a group. Complaints from children are promptly investigated and responses to children are child-friendly and clear. Outcomes of children's complaints are used by the manager to make improvements and changes in the home.

The provider is ambitious for all children in their care. Staff are encouraged to think creatively and promote children's autonomy and resilience. This starts with children

learning simple tasks at home and progresses to bigger life goals. Because of this ethos and investment, children enjoy successes, which make a positive difference to their future. For example, older children achieve employment and learn to drive.

Children's moves out of the home are well planned and fully supported. The manager shares information with relevant agencies, to help make decisions about children's needs and how they can be best met. When appropriate, children are supported to move to the provider's 'staying close' provision, which is local to the home. This helps children to maintain stability and sustain positive attachments to those that they have developed positive relationships with.

The staff provide children with personalised, child-centred care. One professional said, 'It's such a homely place. [Child's name] is treated very much like a child, with age-appropriate routines, fun activities and bedtime stories.'

Children's care plans are very detailed and aspirational. However, when children are not making the desired progress, their plans are not reviewed to reflect the changes needed. This affects the quality of direction and planning, which the staff must follow.

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

Children say that they feel safe in the home.

Children's individual vulnerabilities are clearly identified and understood. Risk assessments are detailed and they highlight where children need the most support and protection. However, in one example, some information in one child's records was contradictory, and the agreed strategies were not up to date.

The manager and senior leaders have high expectations of staff practice and conduct. Allegations against the staff are thoroughly investigated in a timely manner. Children are prioritised, well supported and protected during the process. The provider takes effective action to address poor staff practice; this includes following the provider's disciplinary procedure.

The home continues to be a homely environment, which is comfortable and safe for the children. A large extension is being built to create another bedroom, children's play space and staff workspace. The manager has carried out a risk assessment to ensure that the children are safe while the building works are under way. She has also implemented strategies to minimise disruption to the children, such as excess noise and frequent visitors.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings in a positive way. Therefore, the frequency of behavioural incidents is low. This is because the staff understand the children's emotional needs and provide them with good support.

Incentives are in place to promote the children's positive behaviour and in some cases, they have been very effective in helping to reduce some incidents. However,

when the incentive scheme was not working for one child, the process was not reviewed effectively. This affected the progress that the child made.

Serious incidents involving children are rare. When they do occur, the staff respond appropriately to safeguard the child. The manager reviews each incident and has a good understanding of what occurred. However, she does not consistently document her review or critical evaluation to aid her with continual developments.

The manager and provider usually inform Ofsted when serious incidents occur and provide additional information and updates. However, on one occasion, the manager did not notify Ofsted when police attended the home when there was a concern about a child. This affects the timeliness of this independent oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been changes to the management arrangements of the home. The manager worked for the company before her appointment to this role. She is suitably qualified and she is developing her confidence in the role. The previous manager is now the responsible individual. Together, they have high aspirations for the children and they provide consistent leadership and support to the staff.

Senior leaders promote the use of theoretical models on leadership and management. The manager has completed leadership training to improve her skills in managing staff and leading a team. She has her own development plan and is progressing through this.

The manager uses internal and external audits to identify opportunities for practice improvement. The responsible individual ensures very good oversight of the home. They carry out monthly audits to evaluate the care that the children receive, and they identify areas for development in practice. Recommendations and actions are clearly tracked so improvements are consistently made.

There have been changes to the staff team. Staff have left for different reasons. This has been disruptive and this has affected the consistency of care that the children receive. This is a company-wide issue. Senior leaders have analysed the reasons for staff losses to understand the workforce pressures. As a result, the provider has introduced changes to the recruitment process to improve staff retention.

The staff's well-being and development form a high priority for the manager. Staff receive regular training, most of which is face to face. This helps to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, the children's needs and how to help them. Staff receive regular reflective supervision sessions. However, when staff provide cover in other homes, this practice is not discussed or evaluated in the supervision sessions.

The manager and staff work proactively and in partnership with professionals and agencies. They advocate well on behalf of children and confidently challenge other

professionals when services fall below expectations. However, children's parents are not regularly consulted and updated on their child's progress. This affects how well children's parents understand what is happening in their child's life, and leaves some parents feeling excluded.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's plans are up to date and form the basis of their care. The provider should use their judgement as to what is relevant in each case. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 10, paragraph 2.1)
- The registered person should take the initiative in identifying others who must play a part in their children's lives and engage with those relevant people proactively, in particular children's parents where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.7)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies, in line with the children's individual needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- The registered person should ensure that they continually and actively assess the risks to each child and identify the arrangements in place to protect them. In particular, the registered person should ensure that the children's risk assessments, and the strategies that staff should follow, are up to date and clearly documented. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should be skilled in reviewing incidents and evaluating children's experiences. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice. In particular, the registered person should ensure that they include a reflection of the temporary work completed in other children's homes. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should judge whether events are sufficiently serious to make formal notifications and, if they are, ensure that Ofsted is notified. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.12)

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: 2571902

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ROC Family Support Ltd

Registered provider address: Hope House, Burnhope, Newton Aycliffe, Durham
DL5 7ER

Responsible individual: Laura Roberts

Registered manager: Kaylie Mullin

Inspector

Catherine Heron, Social Care Inspector

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