

ROC Support Network Ltd

ROC Support Network

Inspection report

Hope House
Burnhope
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham
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Website: www.rocgroup.org.uk

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

ROC Support Network provides short breaks for children and young people with disabilities, and their parents and carers. The service is delivered in people's homes, in the community or at an indoor centre. At the time of our inspection the service was being delivered to 23 children.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

ROC Support Network continued to provide an outstanding service. There was an exceptionally strong culture of care led by a passionate provider and managers which ran through the service. Staff felt cared for by the managers which motivated them to provide the best care for people. Parents also felt cared about and recognised the trust they had in staff which afforded them opportunities to do the essential tasks in their daily lives such as go shopping, have time with their children or take their dog for a walk.

Children, young people and their families and carers were assisted by a committed, well supported staff team. Staff worked with families to achieve individual goals with children and young people. Their achievements were well documented using photographs put together in scrapbooks so memories could be shared and revisited.

Families were supported by staff who understood how to protect children and young people from harm. Professionals were greatly appreciative of the ability of staff to form working relationships with families which prevented children and young people being subject to child protection procedures and/or requiring foster care. The behaviour of children and young people as described by their parents and carers when the staff arrived, showed they looked forward to their time with the staff and clearly felt very safe with them.

People's assessed needs were effectively met by well-trained staff. Risks to children and young people associated with their care and support had been assessed in great detail. Staff members understood these risks and negotiated with parents around new activities for their children, to enable children and young people to take positive risks, grow and develop.

Children and young people were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive ways possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this approach.

People's privacy and dignity was always supported. Staff ensured children and young people were listened to and their wishes promoted. The service had recently been awarded the Investors In Children gold award. The award is for organisations which support and encourage children and young people to participate in the decisions which affected them. The voices of children and young people were listened to and acted upon.

Staff showed people true compassion and great empathy for families who found themselves in lockdown

with autistic children and young people requiring structure and education at home. Parents were supported to provide the essential routine and structure for their children whilst staff ensured children and young people continued with their learning. Parents described staff as going the extra mile and not being able to function through the pandemic without the staff.

Staff took a person-centred approach to infection, prevention and control by working with families to meet their unique circumstances. Staff were tested in line with government guidance and provided with the required personal protective equipment (PPE).

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee autistic people and people with a learning disability the choices, dignity, independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. Right Support, right care, right culture is the statutory guidance which supports CQC to make assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

Right support:

- Care and support was negotiated in detail with families according to their needs, wishes and personal choices. The support was adapted as needs changed. Parents, carers and siblings of children and young people with autism and learning disabilities derived significant benefits from the service.

Right care:

- The well-being of children, young people, their parents and carers was enhanced by the service. Staff went the extra mile to meet people's needs. The service recognised and promoted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and young people were afforded their human rights.

Right culture:

- The ethos, values, attitudes and behaviours of the provider, the managers and care staff ensured children and young were empowered to learn and grow in confidence. Parents, children and families were empowered to achieve their goals.

The service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting the underpinning principles of Right support, right care, right culture.

The service was exceptionally well-led by managers who were very proactive in addressing the needs of staff and the people who used the service. They ensured staff were well supported and competent to carry out their roles. Staff echoed the comments made by one member of staff who said, "I have never worked somewhere that is so passionate about the families they support and the workers." Support of the staff team was of the utmost importance to the managers, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when they had been asked to put themselves at risk.

Governance systems were highly effective. The provider had methods in place to encourage children, young people, their parents and carers to contribute to the service, provide feedback and learn lessons. All feedback was welcomed.

There were excellent working relationships with other professionals who valued the work of the service in supporting families and paid tribute to their skills.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was outstanding. (Report published November 2019)

Why we inspected

We undertook this inspection as part of a random selection of services rated good and outstanding to test the reliability of our new monitoring approach.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for ROC Support Network on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service was exceptionally safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

The service was exceptionally effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

The service was exceptionally responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was exceptionally well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Outstanding 

ROC Support Network

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector and an Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection

This inspection was unannounced.

What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return. This is information providers are required to send us with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. This information helps support our inspections. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 14 people who used the service about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with six members of staff including the owner, the nominated individual, registered manager, operational

managers and care workers. We sent questionnaires out to all staff and received 10 responses.

We reviewed a range of records. This included five people's care records. We looked at three staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We spoke with three professionals who regularly visited or had contact with the service and sought further views from parents.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were protected by a strong and distinctive approach to safeguarding, including positive risk-taking to maximise their control over their lives. People were fully involved, and the provider was open and transparent when things went wrong.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- There were strong safeguarding arrangements in place to protect children and young people. Safeguarding was an expressed underpinning value of the services on which the provider's safeguarding processes and procedures were built. The referral document to the service itemised areas of safeguarding staff could use either to be vigilant or support family members.
- Without exception every member of staff said they would feel confident in raising any concerns about a child or young person with their managers. They felt well trained in safeguarding and were able to discuss any emerging concerns and look at ways to monitor or address them. Staff said, "There is always someone there who cares about you and is willing to listen."
- Professionals described cases where children were at risk or needing to leave their family home. Staff understood the importance of developing positive working relationships with families to prevent family breakdown and reduce levels of stress in households. One professional described the staff as 'phenomenal' whilst parents repeatedly described the staff as 'life-savers' in keeping their family together.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Assessing risks in significant detail was a fundamental part of the service. The assessment tool used by staff was very thorough and staff were very confident in using the risk assessments compiled by their managers. Parents and carers trusted staff to understand the needs of the children and young people. They said, "We are confident they can keep our child safe" and "I am confident my child is safe because I have told them everything and it is all covered."
- Staff worked in very close partnership with parents and carers to take positive risks which resulted in children and young people trying new activities, acquiring new skills and growing in confidence. For example, one young person with additional learning needs and physical disabilities was able to increase their use of indoor play equipment and had gone on to use further play activities. One parent said, "The staff ask me first before they take my child to new places."
- Any new risks to children and young people were quickly identified by staff, discussed with managers in detail and solutions sought with parents. This included different ways to provide personal care to avoid any distress reactions and safe travelling in vehicles. As a result, families experienced peace of mind. A parent said, "We are safe because they (staff) are here and help and talk through issues."
- Parents described how children and young people positively responded to the staff. Without exception the behaviour of children and young people showed they felt very safe with the carers. Parents said, "My child loves going out with them. They take my child to places that are less busy, they think and plan", and "It's brilliant, my child could not be happier when they go out with the carers."

Preventing and controlling infection

- The provider and managers took a highly proactive approach to infection prevention and control. This was underpinned by balancing the needs of families at risk from COVID-19, with great empathy for families finding themselves at home with children and young people no longer in school.
- Families were empowered to reduce the risks to themselves and their children according to their personal circumstances and the vulnerability of themselves and their children. In the first instance families were engaged to provide written consent for workers to enter their home during the pandemic. This was reviewed as the pandemic progressed together with the vaccination roll-out.
- The registered manager had joined regular meetings run by the local Public Health body to be at the forefront of advice and proactively learn about COVID-19. Staff were immediately trained and provided with information on PPE usage. Government guidance on staff testing was stringently followed and staff valued the contact with their managers on a very regular basis to check on their well-being.
- Families told us they had a choice about how their service was delivered. Visits to families took place at the end of the gardens to provide emotional support whilst staff maintained social distancing.
- We were assured the provider's infection prevention and control arrangements were up to date.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The provider and the managers were very keen to learn lessons so they could review and improve their ways of working and offer support to staff. In response to one incident when a young person became distressed when out with staff, managers provided a very in-depth response. They developed workshops and shared their experience with the staff. The registered manager explained this was an initiative to develop learning on autism and encourage staff to reflect on their previous learning and translate more of it into practice. Staff felt this had improved their learning. One staff member said, "We recently had two training workshops this was around autism and challenging behaviour. This was an outcome of an incident and lessons learnt. We all had the chance to talk about it and ask questions and seek advice which was really good to reflect on."

Staffing and recruitment

- Processes for staff recruitment and allocation to families were highly robust. Staff were interviewed by a panel of managers who were all experienced in recruitment.
- Matching staff to families was critical to the success of the service. Managers observed the introductions of staff to families to ensure children, young people and their families connected with staff and could build positive relationships. Families spoke highly of their allocated staff and used words such as 'brilliant' or 'fantastic' to describe them.
- If a member of staff became unwell, families were offered an alternative carer. Families made the choice to accept the offer based on their needs and those of their children.
- During the pandemic referrals were made to the service for families in crisis. The manager carried out an assessment and negotiated with families what they could provide with the existing staffing levels. Families and professionals alike valued the willingness of the service to adapt. Parent comments included "Don't know what we would have done without them" and "As a service you could not ask for better."

Using medicines safely

- Although staff did not routinely administer children and young people's medicines, staff were trained in rescue medicines if a child had a seizure.
- Parents were confident in the ability to support their child. They said, "They did give my child medication this summer which they had been trained to do. My child has their medication through their PEG." PEG stands for percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy which is a tube that allows people to be fed directly into their stomach.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has now improved to outstanding. This meant people's outcomes were consistently better than expected compared to similar services. People's feedback described it as exceptional and distinctive.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- Staff carried out comprehensive assessments which led to detailed care plans for children and young people. Staff quickly adapted to working with families who had been severely impacted by school closures. Parents said staff made useful sensory bags which contained all the things their child liked. A parent said, "I think they went the extra mile with the sensory pack they sent." Another parent described a young person as thriving when in the absence of school, staff provided structure to a young person's life. They wanted to thank ROC as a family when a young person learned how to bake bread, bake cakes, and mow the lawn.
- Staff were extremely effective in continually assessing needs. Detailed information was gathered in line with national guidance from different professionals and assessments were highly accurate. One professional said the referral document for the service was the most comprehensive they completed. Parents were assured by the effectiveness of the service. One parent said, "The best bit is that my child is safe and well looked after. I can go to the shop and walk the dog. They (staff) listen to me when I need a rant."
- Staff enabled parents to make a significant contribution to assessments. One parent said, "We were really involved in the assessment and their [ROC Support Network] communication is good. We have a copy of the care plan and so does school. They asked the right questions at the assessment. They [staff] ask us if they are unsure about anything."
- Staff were relentless in finding creative solutions to extremely challenging behaviours. As a result, staff were able to assist children and young people with personal care and return to their social activities.
- Staff had a great understanding of the needs of parents and provided additional support when parents experienced life changing events to minimise impact on their children. Parents said, "A massive thank you to everyone at ROC family support. I don't know what I would have done without you" and "When I or my child is in need of help, they [staff] get back to me." One relative was able to provide essential care to other children in their family and keep everyone together due to the support from staff.
- After very positive experiences parents created video clips to express how much they valued the service. A parent described ROC as a "Godsend". Staff had worked with a fearful young person to get them out again.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

- Most of the children and young people were outside of the age requirements of the MCA. Whilst the MCA was not relevant to the service, staff sought consent from the families to work with their children
- Staff empowered children and young people to be active participants in their care. One staff member said, "The child always leads on where they want to go verbally giving permission on the whole session. The child is always listened to and we are happy for them to express their views in what they would like."
- Without exception all staff showed good practice in seeking children and young people's consent. A staff member said, "We discuss what we will do at the beginning of a session encouraging a young person I work with to vocalise or nod, she will wave indicating when she is ready to go out and about. We use verbal communication, eye contact, speaking at a pace the child/young person can understand, signing, gestures or using signs the child recognises."

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Highly skilled staff met the needs of children and young people. Parents were confident staff were able to meet their child's individual needs. Comments included, "The staff do have enough training to meet our child's needs", and "The staff 100% have the right training. This is the best we have had [ROC Support Network]" and "They must have the right training because it's working."
- Managers put arrangements in place to ensure staff delivered a high-quality service. Parents told us additional training was provided which involved staff and parents working together. One parent said, "The nurse came to our home and trained them all [staff] in colostomy changing." A member of staff said, "I feel the company provides excellent training both through e-learning and face to face. Training is helpful to refresh knowledge and skills and all very relevant to our roles."
- Staff were very positive about their individual learning needs being met. One staff member said, "I enjoy the practical training, its hands on and informative. The online training is helpful too as you can go back and review it as much as you feel necessary and we have downloadable handbooks too. If there needs to be extra training, then [manager] ensures we have it and always checks that we understand it so we can carry out our role efficiently and effectively."
- Managers proactively worked with staff during staff induction periods and beyond to develop positive relationships, provide support and quickly address any learning requirements. Opportunities were continually provided for staff to reflect, identify their training needs and share learning with colleagues.
- Managers were highly motivated to support staff during the pandemic. A staff member said, "A return to work COVID-19 workshop was put in place to explain all the COVID procedures and measures in place for ours and our service user's safety."

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- Due to the pandemic taking children out to eat and drink was curtailed. Staff had sought creative ways such as taking picnics to provide children and young people with food and drink.
- Staff assisted parents to have informed discussions with other professionals by reporting what their children had eaten during outings. Staff used picnics to support children's nutrition during lockdown.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- Managers were committed to working closely with professionals to achieve the best possible care for children and young people. Staff asked professionals for feedback to see if they could improve their care.
- Professionals valued the effective joined up care provided by staff and the positive updates given by them in Team Around the Family meetings. One professional told us staff were very effective in supporting a parent outside of normal hours to get emergency treatment for their child.
- Managers adapted during the pandemic to address the needs of families living in crisis. One operations manager provided updates to a multi-agency group which promoted good working relationships.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as outstanding. At this inspection this key remained the same. This meant people were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- The provider had a strong set of values which underpinned exceptionally high standards of caring. These were shared with the staff during their induction and reinforced by managers in all aspects of their service. On their website the providers spoke of the 'golden thread of caring' which goes throughout their company. One parent said, "They helped me be a better mum."
- All staff felt the management team genuinely cared about them, which motivated them to provide the best care. One staff member said, "The staff team and management team are outstanding in the quality of care they give to the service users and families. They are all truly amazing, and embed the core values of the company, work to best practice and always go the extra mile to ensure the best quality care is provided for the children." Another staff member said, "We have an excellent team of staff who I feel have so much respect for each other, they show kindness to each other and amazing empathy towards the children we care for."
- People were supported by staff members who knew and respected them as individuals and assisted them to participate in activities to promote their well-being and enhance their abilities. Staff listened to children and young people who were non-verbal by observing their behaviour and assessing their best response to outing suggestions, which included making the loudest noise when a trip to the seaside was offered. Staff spoke to one child with a visual impairment and described to them what was in front of them when they were out together.
- Parents described the impact of the caring nature of the staff on them. One parent said, "The staff are friendly and don't judge you. They don't put pressure on you and if my child is having a meltdown, they are patient and wait for it to pass. They listen to my child and if my child wants to come home early, they will bring them home: but they do take the long way around, so we still get a break. Going the extra mile literally."
- Staff had an excellent understanding of how to develop a rapport with children, young people and their families. Parents consistently talked about children and young people being excited to see their worker. Comments included, "I can see that the staff care because I see them giving my child a cuddle. They also help by cutting my child's finger nails because he won't let me do them", and "The best bits about ROC is our child looks forward to it (session) and loves being there. When we arrive at the car park our child is excited and eager to meet the girls (staff). Our child will make lots of noises, gets very hyper and will bounce and clap."

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- Staff were highly skilled in empowering children and young people to express their views. Children and

young people were given choices by staff at every visit. One parent said, "They (carers) have our child's best interests at heart."

- The service had achieved the Investors in Children gold standard award for listening to children and young people. Staff were motivated to communicate with children and young people. A parent said, "Staff from ROC talk to my child and not just us."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- The privacy and dignity of families, children and young people were fiercely protected by staff. There were many examples of the eight dignity factors as identified by the Social Care Institute for Excellence. These included giving children and young people control over their lives by affording them choices. Parents spoke about staff treating their children in a dignified manner. The comments from parents included "They are brilliant and communicate well with us. I know they are caring just by how they are with my child", and "I would describe the staff that I have met to be very friendly and interested in my child. My child is non-verbal, but the staff speak to him and treat him like any other kid. They also ask if I am alright."

- Staff enhanced the dignity of children and young people by promoting their social inclusion. Staff took children to a youth club which was safe for them and where they could integrate with other children and young people. They took them to soft play which was safe for them but also where other children accessed. Photographs showed how children were supported by staff to integrate with others. One parent said, "Staff are amazing."

- Every effort was made by the service to develop young people's independence and confidence. Scrapbooks were filled by staff with photographs of children and young people engaged in activities to promote their independence. These included young people shopping and paying for their goods before returning to the centre to cook their meal, brushing their teeth, getting ready to go out and preparing their bag. Family comments included, "[Young person] is a lot more independent now whereas before I would have done it for ease and quickness", and "My child's independence has come on with the support from school and ROC. My child can now walk along beside you and doesn't run off (they used to). We are so happy with the staff – this is the extra mile."

- Staff said, "The support plans inform us of the 'stage of independence' that the child is at. We then use that to plan activities that promotes independence. We have an independent living kitchen that we use with some young people where we do cooking activities. Activities are always planned around the individual needs of each child which supports with their independence." A visually impaired young person was having difficulties developing life skills in the kitchen due to requiring specialist equipment. The provider bought a talking microwave, an adapted keyboard, hot and cold-water level indicators and kettle aids which enabled the young person to move around the kitchen with confidence and develop their skills.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as outstanding. At this inspection this key question remained the same. This meant services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- Children and young people's needs were at the heart of the service. The service was extremely person-centred and greatly family-centred which meant parents were able to gain trust with the staff, relax and meet the needs of their other family members. One parent said, "We, as a family, get to spend more time together now. We enjoy some peace and quiet. Our child is like a whirlwind." Another parent really valued staff arranging to collect their child from school and taking them out for tea whilst their other children could enjoy their meal without being disturbed.
- Care plans were developed with parents to include small details about children and young people's likes and dislikes to enhance their quality of life.
- Staff had a great understanding of children and young people's sensory needs and devised ways on how to meet them. This included documenting how a young person had put their arms out and felt the wind in their face and how one young person was given the sensory experience of feeling sand between their toes on a beach. Photographs showed the great pleasure children and young people derived from this high quality of care. One staff member recorded, "We watched the leaves falling and listened to the stream."

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- The service adapted during the pandemic to provide a higher level of responsive care. New families who had reached crisis point were supported during lockdown to avoid breakdown and keep family relationships intact. One parent said, "They have the best communication and the carers are always doing something with my child. The difference it had made to my family is that we would be black and blue because of their kicking, biting and hitting."
- Staff worked with families to transport children and young people to respite care to give families a break and an opportunity to sustain their family life.
- Staff found many varied and creative ways to ensure each young person achieved agreed goals and maintained their well-being in the absence of a daily school structure. Young people learned their numbers, got used to transitions between parents and staff, achieved a sponsored walk, learned to provide their own personal care and baked bread, scones and a cake for their sibling's birthday. One young person's goals were to have fun, be happy, stay safe and make friends to increase confidence. Photographs showed them being happy and having fun at a children's play venue, in sensory rooms, visiting a butterfly farm, making pizza and visiting a farm and the seaside. Another young person's goal was to spend more time out of their wheelchair; staff took them to soft play and trampolining which allowed greater independent movement.
- Staff demonstrated they understood the importance of person centred activities to meet the needs of the

children and young people. One staff member said, "We choose activities that promote inclusion, we encourage social activities within the local community working in a safe and protective way for our young person in the current situation. We discuss activities with parents and take on board any suggestions they make for venues e.g. a family used garden centre, or horse riding (when available due to COVID-19)."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- Children and young people were empowered to communicate by staff who showed confidence in adapting to their communication needs. Communication with children and young people was highly valued and encompassed in the explicit values of the organisation. Staff documented in great detail their observations of children and young people's behaviour, and the steps they had taken to meet their needs.
- Staff were very responsive to meeting communication needs and had completed courses in British Sign Language (BSL) to support their work with young people. One staff member said, "I work with (child) and the only way she was communicating is signing using BSL. I work with her on what she is saying as I did a training course around doing BSL."
- Parents were confident in the ability of staff to meet communication needs. Staff use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and had learned Makaton to engage children and young people in communication. Comments from parents included, "My child doesn't use symbols, but the staff pick up the facial expressions easily" and, "My child is non-verbal and uses a communication board. There is to be a new communication board and we will all be learning to use it. My child will teach us. We use Makaton and the staff can as well."

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The service had received no complaints.
- Families reported if they had raised any issue with staff or the management team, they had immediately sought a solution to address the issue. One parent had raised a concern and said, "ROC was brilliant when I told them. We did use another organisation and then ROC took over. ROC are a million times better."
- Parents were effusive in their praise of the service when asked about if they had made a complaint. One parent said, "I don't know what they could do to make things better I am quite happy with how it is. Really good. They have allocated the right staff. I haven't needed to make a complaint."

End of life care and support

- There was no-one using the service who required end of life care.
- Staff worked with children and young people who were diagnosed with life limiting conditions and aimed to make their lives and that of their family as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. The service continued to ensure children and young people could grow and develop.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- There was an exceptionally positive culture in the service driven by managers who were passionate, enthusiastic and who actively demonstrated by their actions the embedded core values of the service. The core values included integrity, transparency and respect, the rights of children and young people, diversity and equality, listening and consultation, and recognition. Parents gave the service high scores. One parent said, "The management are brilliant. I have no concerns (about them). I can't thank Reach Out enough. They are life savers. I would rate them as 20 out of 10."
- Staff described feeling motivated by their managers. One staff member said, "I feel led by a company that goes over and above to deliver an outstanding service to the children and families that we work with."
- The service had recently achieved two awards. They had demonstrated how they listened to children and young people and achieved the gold standard in Investing in Children. They had also won the regional care awards for being the Best Employer of the Year. The service managers were proud of their achievements.
- Staff felt they were highly supported in their work and this enabled them to support families in the best possible way. Parents commented on the positive demeanour of the staff and said, "The staff seem happy, smiley, happy and bubbly", "I haven't seen a miserable face yet" and "The staff seem happy and don't moan or chunter. They are extremely professional and are chatty with us."
- Managers listened to the ideas of staff and took action. Activity packs had been provided to children during lockdown and one member of staff was inspired to create collages to show how proud they were of children's achievements during lockdown.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

- There was an exceptionally clear governance framework in place with every level of the organisation understanding where they fit in the organisation structure and to whom they report. Meetings were in place so information could be shared from the executive management team to the staff and back to the leaders of the service. Staff felt they were a significant part of the organisation and worked well with their operations managers. They were comfortable reporting to any manager in the service to raise issues or suggest new initiatives.
- Managers worked in a cohesive team together to share and learn. They had management development days and had devised their own improvement plan. Not all children could get out and about due to needing specialist transport. The provider had resolved this issue by purchasing an adapted minibus.

- Staff were exceptionally positive about their managers in driving quality improvement. Amongst the many positive staff comments one staff member said, "Exceptional is the only way I can explain. This is my manager, exceptional! I admire her so much; she is so caring. She has so much vision and her values are from the heart. She is always looking at ways to develop all of her staff team and has a strong emphasis on improvement. I become so motivated and mesmerised when she holds meetings as she is so knowledgeable and can get all of the staff team fully engaged in what she wants us to achieve. We all feel so exceptionally lucky to have such an amazing manager. She is there 24-7 and nothing is ever too much for her."

- Managers had put successful initiatives in place to recognise the high-quality service delivery by staff. They had a 'Tell on Your Team' system where staff could report excellent work. One staff member said, "I can honestly say that working for ROC is fantastic, the best place I have ever worked, they are so dedicated to achieving the best for the people they support, and really do recognise their staff through the tell on your team recognition scheme for staff, recognition stories are shared in team meetings and in the companies newsletter, staff are also recognised through the great development opportunities within the company." Relatives used words such as 'brilliant', 'top notch' and 'best service' to describe their experiences.

- Managers understood the duty of candour responsibilities. There had been no incidents where they needed to report something which had gone wrong.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Continuous learning and improving care

- Staff involvement in the service was exceptional. Staff were included in all communication using meetings, news bulletins and regular emails. Staff spoke about having a buddy system to support them and their work was always recognised in supervision sessions. One staff member said, "When the first lockdown came, we supported and encouraged each other and the families we work with. This is something I hadn't experienced before and made me very proud of our team", and "Our ideas are listened to, and if there is something the team would like to do or try, we will see how it would work and what we could achieve for the families."

- Alternative options were provided to staff to promote their involvement. Staff reported they were highly valued and engaged to work together to support families. A staff member said, "I am very involved with the service and have recently discussed with my manager what more can be done to support our children and young people. There is a suggestions box where I can put ideas in for the manager to consider. I always feel listened to and am given regular feedback. Any suggestions were considered and if possible, acted upon."

- Arrangements to involve children, young people, their parents and carers and key stakeholders were carried out by enthusiastic managers who were willing to learn about people's experiences.

- Everyone was engaged and supported to be involved. Managers regularly met with families to hear their views and make improvements. Children and young people had their own questionnaire and were supported by parents to respond or parents acted as their advocate. One parent had written on behalf of their child, "You always play with me and take me out", and "I love you being here."

Working in partnership with others

- Professionals were very positive about working with the staff. They particularly valued the high levels of communication with them. Staff quickly let them know of any emerging difficulties for families.

- Staff received praise for contributing to children and young people's reviews. Professionals told us the attendance of staff at review meetings was particularly supportive to them and parents.

- Professionals found the adaptations managers made to the service to support families in crisis during the pandemic to be very supportive of their work to keep families together. One professional said, "There is a culture of willingness and team work and a desire to support the young people on my caseload who access the service to achieve and be the best they can be."

- The registered manager was very proactive in seeking out opportunities to work with education establishments from where the service could source their potential future workforce.