

1212708

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd 04004053

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager left in April 2021. There is currently no manager in post.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 31 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
17/07/2019	Full	Good
07/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The home was judged to be inadequate at the last full inspection. This inspection has been carried out to review progress towards improving the quality of care and safety of children. There was one child living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The care and support being provided for the child are not yet consistently good enough. There are still insufficient staff with the skills, training and knowledge to achieve the good care required. Managers have identified that they cannot meet the child's needs safely, and consequently the child needs to move placements. Leaders and managers have implemented a credible, short-term care plan pending a new placement being identified by the local authority.

The managers and staff have not been able to progress important areas of the child's care plan. For example, at the last inspection, concerns were identified about the child's lack of progress in his education. Managers and staff have made some limited progress in this area; however, the child is not yet attending for the planned hours on his educational timetable. As a result, the child is missing out on an important stage of his education.

The manager and staff have tried to build positive relationships with the child. There have been some improvements in this area. However, the child is still spending a lot of time away from the home. This has hampered him in developing bonds with staff and developing a sense of belonging in the home, both of which are crucial in enabling him to make progress.

The staff have supported the child to express his wishes and feelings in relation to his own child. The child has been supported to attend meetings and is now able to see his child regularly. The staff have advocated with good effect in this area. He is now able to contribute to the care of his child. This has given the child a purpose in his life and some confidence that his views matter.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The manager and staff are aware of the risks posed to and from children. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans have recently been updated. This was a requirement from the last inspection. The child has been known to bring items of concern into the home. There has been some progress made in implementing room searches. This provides the staff and managers with assurance that there is nothing inappropriate being brought into the home. Records are kept of the searches and any subsequent actions taken.

The manager and staff have not ensured that searches of bags and personal belongings take place, when they have cause for concern. This has placed the child and staff at increased risk. Following the last inspection, managers ensured that the child has been included in a written contract to increase safety in relation to these risks.

Managers have now referred the child to more specialist services to help reduce cannabis use and the risk of knife crime. The child has had initial meetings with professionals, but is not yet accepting regular support. The staff have undertaken key-work sessions to motivate him to commit to this important work, but at this stage it has not been successful. As a result, the behaviours of concern are not yet reducing.

Managers have ensured that information pertaining to the risk of criminal exploitation has been recorded in the required multi-agency document. This has been shared with the relevant agencies. As a result, a strategy meeting can now take place to fully assess the level of risk to the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers have demonstrated a commitment to addressing the concerns identified at the last inspection. There is a detailed and realistic action plan which is subject to regular review. Some key actions are being implemented. For example, staff have started to receive essential training and more regular individual supervision. The managers have started to improve the working conditions for staff, with shift patterns that have shorter working hours. Staff say the atmosphere in the home is more positive and they feel supported by managers. Over time, this will enable staff to care for children more effectively. Several statutory requirements were made at the last full inspection. Although the actions taken by managers and leaders have started to make some progress, these requirements are not yet met, so the requirements are reissued.

Managers have updated risk assessments and behaviour management plans for children. There are some records, however, which have not yet had sufficient oversight by managers. Managers have recognised the importance of checking that daily records correspond with other key documents. This will ensure that there is consistency in children's records.

Managers share information with the professional network, but there have been occasions when important information has not been shared with external agencies or family members. This can lead to delays in actions being taken to prevent children from coming to harm.

There are not yet sufficient staff to care for children safely. Leaders and managers are prioritising recruitment to ensure that this is rectified as quickly as possible. Managers have agreed that children will not be placed in the home until such a time that the home is appropriately staffed to meet their needs.

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, 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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (Regulation 8 (1)) This specifically relates to children attending some form of regular education provision.	12 January 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;	12 January 2022

understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour, and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(ix)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children’s plans outline what acceptable behaviour is. If a child’s behaviour is unacceptable, plans should detail what steps will be taken to address this. Plans to manage risk should be clearly communicated to children. Children’s plans should be maintained to a good standard. Documents should be viewed and updated as live documents. Staff should continue to be supported to understand attachment, substance misuse and addiction.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; 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; that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)(e)) This specifically relates to ensuring that managers review and evaluate each child’s risk-taking behaviours. Where children struggle with substance misuse, this should be monitored alongside any signs of child criminal exploitation.	12 January 2022

If it is not safe for children to have forms of ignition in their bedrooms, steps should be taken to ensure that this does not happen. If staff believe that a child has drugs or a weapon, steps should be taken to ensure that these items do not remain within the home unless there is a plan for these items to be taken by staff. Child criminal exploitation risks should be clearly communicated to wider professionals. Each child's risk assessment should be updated and evaluated.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(d)(f)(h)) Managers must review and sign children's documents and ensure that staff understand each child's documents and that information in key records is cross-referenced with related documents. Where staff do not feel safe at work, managers should take steps to ensure that staff are supported to provide quality care for children in a way that meets their needs.	12 January 2022

Managers must continue to ensure that on-call management processes are effective, so as to make sure that staff receive necessary support in a timely manner. Managers must ensure that there are sufficient staff with relevant training to care for children safely and effectively.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; and 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) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(e)) This specifically relates to managers needing to review each child's care plan, to ascertain if staff can meet each child's needs. If children are not making progress, then steps should be taken to better equip the staff team to meet each child's needs. Where children are parents, staff should ensure that the child's wishes, as a parent are represented at their child's meetings. To do this effectively, managers should be liaising with wider professionals and having regular discussions with the child about their parenting wishes and the safety of their child.	12 January 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, which may include services, individuals (including parents), agencies, organisations and establishments that work with children in the local community, for example police, schools, health and youth offending teams (regulation 5 – engaging with the wider system to ensure that children's needs are met). These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard (regulation 14). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)

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: 1212708

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd 04004053

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Donna Carlin

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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