

1230725

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to five children aged between 8 and 17. The children have previously experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable. This is one of several children's homes operated by this private provider.

There has been no registered manager since June 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2022

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/09/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/08/2019	Full	Good
26/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are two children living at the home. Since the last inspection two children have moved out and one child has moved in. Children who have previously experienced multiple moves experience stability. One child has lived at this home for over a year. When children move on they stay in touch with staff.

Children learn about budgeting and build savings. This helps to ensure they have additional financial help. The children learn to cook with the staff. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and choose the interior decoration. En-suite bedrooms and a games room provide ample space for the children to relax.

Children make significant progress in education. Children who have previously been unable to engage meaningfully with education attend school. Staff develop good relationships with children's class teachers. They take children to school, attend meetings, help with schoolwork and encourage home study. Children's attendance improves and some go on to sit GCSEs. Children's achievements and successes in education are celebrated and rewarded.

Some of the children smoke. The staff discuss the health effects of smoking with children. However, support to encourage children to reduce smoking is inconsistent and does not go far enough to help children to stop.

The staff advocate for the children and seek their views. This ensures complaints and concerns from the children are aired and addressed. Strong professional relationships with visiting agencies give children the opportunity to have their say and find new ways to resolve conflict.

Children attend necessary appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians. Staff communicate well with the children's social workers. Children have time with their families and get the help that they need from a core team of staff.

Children participate in some activities in the local community, such as football, swimming and boxing. However, recently children's involvement in activities has reduced. This does not ensure that every child benefits from a broad range of experiences.

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

Children said that they feel safe. The staff sit with children individually to listen to their worries. This helps children to share how they are feeling and enables staff to identify what works to reduce significant risk.

The staff and managers work effectively with other agencies. External professionals commend the actions from staff to keep children safe from exploitation. Staff respond appropriately when children leave the home without permission. They consistently ensure that agencies are informed. Incidents of children going missing from the home increased for a short period and have recently reduced.

Children recognise the staff's perseverance in helping them manage extreme behavioural responses. The staff help the children to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour and safety.

Children's individualised risk assessments are lengthy and do not give staff enough direction. On at least one occasion the staff did not physically intervene to prevent children from potential harm. This does not demonstrate that every member of staff understands their responsibility about when to intervene to keep the children safe.

Staff know how to raise a concern. Allegations about staff conduct are shared transparently with the relevant agencies. Investigations and feedback from external managers help to identify areas to improve practice.

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

The registered manager left in June 2022. The established, child-centred deputy manager is providing interim management cover. She has good relationships with the staff and knows the children well. The responsible individual has appointed a new manager.

Staff are tired. Challenges in staff recruitment and retention have resulted in local permanent staff working additional hours and coming in on days off to support colleagues. Recently the responsible individual has also worked shifts.

Staff supervision sessions and appraisals are not up to date. Staff induction is not sufficiently focused. Most training is online. Although staff complete mandatory training, not all staff have received training or professional development that reflects the needs of the children they care for. This does not ensure that every member of staff is equipped to carry out their role, and it does not accurately reflect the statement of purpose.

The external report from the independent person makes meaningful recommendations to safeguard children and staff. Complaints from neighbours are addressed and investigated by the responsible individual. However, the actions to improve community relationships have not been addressed in a timely way by senior leaders.

Audits ensure that senior staff identify the shortfalls in practice. However, written records, such as the children's support plans, are significantly out of date. Some actions identified from audits are not followed through within the identified

timescales. Therefore, the actions to drive improvement do not result in timely change.

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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(b))	30 September 2022
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that individual risk assessments are recorded clearly and that staff consistently follow this written guidance.	28 October 2022

The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) 4(a)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that all staff access meaningful training that reflects the needs of the children in their care.	28 October 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that— 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(h)) In particular, implement actions identified from audits, ensure written plans are up to date and ensure a proactive response to complaints from neighbours.	28 October 2022
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	28 October 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person must ensure that children's homes staff encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. In particular, support children to stop smoking. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

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: 1230725

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Registered provider address: Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor SL4 1EG

Responsible individual: Nasae Evanson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rosie Davie, Social Care Inspector

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