

1234430

Registered provider: Positive Pathways Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home's aim is to provide care in a safe, nurturing, supportive, family-type environment.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 January 2020

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: 2 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2017	Full	Outstanding

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c)) This is in relation to considering children's views regarding their plans and offering additional support when required.	28/02/20

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) This is in relation to ensuring that staff consistently follow children's risk management plans, ensure that these are updated, work with children to reduce identified risks and ensure that children are offered return home interviews by someone independent when they have been missing from care.
- Staff should understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.39)
- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have a positive experience of living in the home and make good progress from their starting points. Children say that they are happy, settled and safe. One child said, 'I couldn't live in a better place.'

Staff help children to develop their own identities. Individuality and difference are encouraged and celebrated. A child said, 'I can be myself', which reflects how comfortable she is in herself and how well staff have supported her with this.

Children develop trusted and secure relationships with the registered manager and staff. Mostly, children can talk to staff about how they are feeling and are supported to find alternative and more positive ways to manage their frustrations. This enables children to develop strategies to manage their behaviours and emotions better.

Children receive personalised care. For example, children can have pets and decorate their rooms to their personal tastes, and they are included in individual and group discussions in relation to their care and well-being. This provides children with a sense of belonging and they invest in their home.

Staff support children to attend routine health appointments. For two children, staff and the registered manager successfully worked with specialist agencies to address serious concerns in relation to their physical health. As a result, both children experienced improved health outcomes. In addition, the in-house clinical psychologist regularly reviews children's progress and offers support and guidance to staff. Consistent and coordinated care promotes children's physical health and emotional well-being.

Children attend school and college and have support to help them achieve. When there are difficulties with children attending school, the registered manager and staff work closely with teachers to address any issues and to work out how children can return to school. However, children's case files do not contain up-to-date education plans. This means that children's case files are not always reflective of children's current needs and plans.

Staff support children to develop age-appropriate independence skills. Children make some excellent progress. For example, children with complex needs now go to college, travel independently and are developing some essential life skills, such as shopping and cooking. However, when children are struggling to manage some aspects of this, staff do not offer consistently good support. For example, one child told the inspector that recently she was struggling with cooking daily meals due to the demands of her college work. This meant that, for a short period of time, she was not eating healthy, home-cooked meals. She did not feel that the staff were helping her with this at a time when she needed their support. In addition, she was unclear about plans for her future, which was causing her additional worry.

Staff celebrate and reward children's achievements and progress but do not do this consistently. As a result, children do not get regular recognition for their achievements.

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

The registered manager and staff have worked with children and relevant agencies to understand children's behaviours and associated risks. This collaborative working helps to keep children safe.

The registered manager and staff work well with children to manage and de-escalate situations. As a result, the need to restrain children to keep them safe is not common. When restraint has been necessary, staff use this in accordance with good practice and there is effective management oversight. This ensures that use of restraint is safe and proportionate.

Good partnership working with the local police and other neighbourhood organisations enables the registered manager and staff to keep up to date with potential risks in the local area. If any issues arise relating to the location of the home, these are quickly addressed.

New staff are safely recruited. The registered manager ensures that staff undergo thorough checks before they start working at the home. This helps to ensure that only suitable people care for children.

Most children's risk assessments are updated to reflect current risks and behaviours. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to keep children safe. However, on one occasion a child's updated crisis plan was not followed by staff and it was not clear from the records kept at the home what work was undertaken to help him to understand the risk that he had exposed himself to by leaving the home at night without permission. In addition, one child's plan for managing risks relating to self-harm was out of date. If unaddressed, these shortfalls have the potential to undermine the otherwise good work that staff do to keep children safe.

Children do not go missing from the home often. When this happens, staff and the registered manager work closely with police and children's families. In addition, they respond promptly, going to look for the children to ensure that they return home safely. For one child, arranging flexible contact with her family stopped her from going missing. However, children are not always offered the opportunity to talk to someone independent. Although staff request this of the children's social workers, when it does not happen they do not follow this up. This is a missed opportunity to learn more about why children go missing from the home and what happened when children were away.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is reflective of some of the challenges the service has faced over the last year. Time dedicated to supporting staff practice has led to some inconsistencies in her monitoring and reviewing of information in children's case files and

staff recording. She continues to have high expectations of the staff and has a plan in place to address the shortfalls.

The registered manager and staff are passionate about the care that they provide to children and are child-centred. They work well together as a team. This promotes stability and consistency for children.

Staff receive regular supervision, which enables them to reflect on their practice and development. New staff to the home receive a good induction and staff who have worked at the home longer receive annual appraisals. Staff told the inspector that they feel highly valued and very well supported.

Staff undertake a range of online and face-to-face training courses, including training on national issues of concern such as knife crime and county lines. This means that staff gain up-to-date knowledge and learn skills in how to recognise and manage such risks to children.

Professionals who have worked with the registered manager and staff talk very positively about their experiences. Similarly, parents are pleased with the standard of care their children receive. Professionals and parents state that staff and the registered manager have a good understanding of children's needs, support them well, and that they communicate regularly with them so that they are kept up to date with children's progress and needs.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1234430

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Positive Pathways Limited

Registered provider address: Park Business Centre, Hastingwood Industrial Park,
Wood Lane, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B24 9QR

Responsible individual: Danielle Epps

Registered manager: Danielle Epps / Emma Holden

Inspector

Shazana Jamal, social care inspector

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