

1234430

Registered provider: Positive Pathways Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to three children with social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The registered manager has been in post at this home since November 2018.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

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: 24 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/01/2020	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

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

Three children live in the home. Two have lived in the home for over a year. One child has recently moved out in a planned way. This is because managers and staff were unable to meet their complex needs. The child moved into the home without accurate background information being received from the placing authority. Despite managers escalating their concerns, the lack of information had a detrimental effect on the child, the other children living in the home and the staff. Since then, one child's transition to the home has been positive.

The home has experienced an unsettled period. Children have received inconsistent care. This has led to frequent incidents in the home that were not always managed well by staff. This also led to staff being physically assaulted. One child told the inspector that they would 'worry' about staff. They said that there would be 'tension' because of another child's behaviours. One child left the home refusing to return. Children have felt helpless living in an environment of uncertainty. These experiences have undermined their safety and welfare.

Children and staff have since had the opportunity to resettle. Leaders and managers recognised that it was necessary to pause admissions. Since this time, safeguarding incidents have significantly reduced. Children now report that they feel happy living in the home. They told the inspector that they feel 'more comfortable' and 'safer'.

Despite shortfalls in the care children receive, they are continuing to make progress. All children attend full-time education and are achieving. The registered manager is a good advocate for children. As a result, one child has had their education, health and care plan reinstated. This means that they now receive the support they need to reach their full potential. This child has recently received a monetary award for their progress this year.

Children develop positive relationships with the nurturing staff. Children trust staff and confide in them. Staff listen to children and take steps to respond to their concerns. As a result, children feel valued and cared for.

Children receive good support to help them to keep in touch with the people who are important to them. Some arrangements are complex, but staff work hard to manage these arrangements safely and sensitively. For example, one child has implemented their own boundaries when they meet with their parents. As a result, this has improved their emotional well-being.

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

Risk assessments vary in quality. They do not include information about all known risks, including online safety. The monitoring and supervision of children's internet and mobile phone use is poor. This leaves children vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Risk assessments are not always updated. They also contain inconsistent and inaccurate information. This minimises their effectiveness. As a result, staff do not have all the information they need to ensure that children are safe.

The location risk assessment fails to assess risk effectively, in particular in relation to children visiting neighbouring homes owned by the provider. As a result, children witness volatile incidents between other children and towards staff. Children are not always supervised properly when they visit these homes. A lack of risk assessing compromises children's safety and well-being.

Children have missing-from-care plans. Overall, staff follow these when children go missing. However, during one incident, staff did not. This caused delay when locating a child. This child had complex mental health and had left the home in a low mood. This poor response by staff increased the child's vulnerability.

One child smokes in the garden. There is no designated smoking area. They smoke when other children are present in the garden. The risks associated with passive smoking have not been considered by managers and staff, and neither has the impact on children of witnessing unhealthy habits.

Staff carry out some excellent key-work sessions with children, in particular, around emotional regulation. As a result, one child who was self-harming on a daily basis has not done so for a long time. They have developed safer ways to manage their feelings of anxiety. Not only this, but the child is now confident to talk about their experiences. This has given them a sense of pride and achievement.

Leaders and managers recognise that the recording in children's records requires improvement. Staff use different formats to record safeguarding incidents. Recording is often undated and littered with errors and inaccuracies. This impacts on the registered manager's oversight of safeguarding practice.

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

The registered manager has recently returned from a period of absence. Since their return they have decided to resign. Leaders have a recruitment plan in place to ensure that a suitable manager is in post by the time the manager leaves.

The manager's monitoring systems to evaluate the care children receive are ineffective. The systems used do not identify all the shortfalls in staff practice. Some recording systems make it difficult to track incidents which occur in the home. Managers have begun to make improvements. These include new monitoring formats and coaching sessions for the registered manager. This shows some commitment to improving the quality of care children receive.

The home has a stable, committed and passionate staff team. Staff provide children with continuity of care. However, some staff do not feel well supported by managers when incidents occur in the home.

Staff receive regular supervision during which they reflect on children's progress. Regular team meetings take place, which are also reflective. There has recently been a strong focus on sharing information and professional curiosity. This will support consistency of practice in the home. Leaders recognise that this is an area for development.

Staff receive training pertinent to children's needs. However, this is mainly online training which also consists of staff downloading a booklet which they are told to review in their own time. This is inadequate training for staff who are caring for children with complex needs, such as children with poor mental health who self-harm. There is no system in place to monitor the effectiveness of staff training. As a result, managers cannot be certain that staff have the skills to meet children's needs.

The most recent quality of care report does not accurately evaluate the care children receive. It does identify some shortfalls, such as the recording practice in the home. However, improvements to date have been ineffective.

The independent visits do not provide scrutiny and challenge. The reports do not identify the shortfalls in the care provided to children. This does not help the home to improve and also hinders external scrutiny.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;	10 August 2022

that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(c)(d)(e)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that thorough risk assessment is undertaken when children are spending time outside the home. This includes when children visit other homes belonging to the organisation. The registered person must ensure that staff understand their role in keeping children safe. They must ensure that risk assessments accurately identify risk and that staff have the skills to implement strategies to keep children safe. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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 requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	10 August 2022

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) This specifically relates to leaders and managers developing monitoring systems in order to evaluate effectively the quality of care children receive, then using this information to ensure that there is continuous improvement. The registered provider must ensure that all managers and staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children the home intends to care for and to keep them safe. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children's records, including their risk assessments, contain accurate and up-to-date information.	10 August 2022
The registered person must use reasonable endeavours to ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI;	10 August 2022

upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; the placing authorities of children; the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) This specifically relates to the capability of the independent visitor, particularly their ability to identify the shortfalls in the care children receive and to make recommendations for improvement.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This refers specifically to the registered person ensuring that they use the quality of care review to evaluate effectively the quality of care children receive.	10 August 2022

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: 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 B24 9QR

Responsible individual: Danielle Epps

Registered manager: Emma Holden

Inspector

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector

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