

1234430

Registered provider: Positive Pathways Limited

Assurance 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 date: 23 August 2022

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Three children are living in this home. Children say they are happy and feel safe. Children have positive relationships with one another and staff. One child has not lived in the home for long and they have settled in well. Another child referred to this child moving in as being like 'my brother moving in'.

Children have aspirations for their future. All children have plans in place to return to further education when the new term starts. Staff and professionals work together to meet children's educational needs. This enhances children's learning and supports their progress.

Some staff are creative. They implement strategies to support children to communicate their needs, particularly children who have difficulty communicating their emotions. For example, staff encourage one child to use LED lights, and each colour represents a feeling. The child uses them to communicate how they are feeling at any given time. Staff then respond with appropriate emotional support.

Children receive an inconsistent response to their needs. This is because staff are not always provided with clear guidelines of how to respond. For example, some staff do not have a good understanding of one child's sensory needs. This child enjoys the sensory feel of water. However, the child described staff as 'banging loudly' on the door when the child is using the shower. As a result, this child sometimes feels upset and confused. In contrast, staff arranged for this child to attend a swimming club and a youth club. The other children who attend these clubs have similar needs. This helps the child to feel understood and provides a sense of belonging.

Staff help children to re-establish and maintain relationships with their family members. However, there are no contingency plans in place should children require support. For example, one child had expressed some concern about seeing their family member. They chose to do so, but received no guidance from staff about what to do in the event they experienced any difficulties. Another child returned from seeing their family with a sprained ankle. They had not received any medical attention.

The safety of children

Since the last inspection, there have been no significant incidents in the home. Overall, risk assessments outline risks pertinent to children's needs. Staff understand

the risks posed to children and how to respond to keep them safe. However, this remains relatively untested due to the low incidence of safeguarding concerns.

The registered manager and staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. The organisation now has an external provider for staff to contact with any whistle-blowing concerns. Staff are aware of the reporting and recording procedures in the home. However, the quality of children's records remains inconsistent and continues to require improvement.

The organisation has reviewed all of its safeguarding policies and procedures. It has also introduced a new policy in relation to children visiting other homes. These homes are also owned by the organisation and are in close vicinity to this home. The policy sets out the steps managers and staff should take to ensure that children are safe, such as ensuring that visits are pre-planned and thoroughly risk assessed.

One child is making good progress in relation to managing their feelings safely. They are regulating their emotions much better, resulting in less self-harm. This is despite experiencing change which could cause them some anxiety, such as their transition to adulthood and staffing changes in the home.

Children are receiving more support in relation to developing healthier lifestyles. As a result, since the last inspection, one child has stopped smoking when they are at home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The registered manager is leaving the organisation. An interim manager is in place. The responsible individual will be supporting the home when the registered manager leaves.

Another manager has left the home with immediate effect. This could not be pre-empted, but has had a profound impact on children. The children all reported to miss this staff member. Managers have briefly consulted with children about this. However, this has been ineffective at providing the children with reassurance and support.

Improved oversight of the home by senior managers is evident. The responsible individual has regularly attended team meetings and supervisions with staff. There is also evidence of ad hoc visits to the home. During these visits, senior managers spend time with staff exploring safeguarding practice.

Staff are aware of the shortfalls in practice. Some staff are keen to improve the care that children receive. For others, morale remains low and some staff are leaving.

Staff do not undertake training pertinent to children's needs, such as working with children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those who have autism spectrum disorder. Most training is online and dated.

The organisation has recruited a new independent visitor, the effectiveness of which is not yet known. The registered manager has undertaken a review of the quality of care. This includes consultation with children and professionals.

The registered manager has arranged to remain in contact with one child who lives in the home. The child's social worker has agreed this contact. This has not been well planned in liaison with senior management. This has the potential to upset this child's emotional well-being. It remains unclear what the arrangements are for this to happen.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/01/2020	Full	Good
02/01/2019	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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. The conditions are— that the care meets the child's needs; that as far as reasonably practicable the care is delivered by a person who— has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and	18 October 2022

is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix) (3)(b)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to the registered persons ensuring that staff have clear guidelines and strategies to meet the needs of children, in particular children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those who have autism spectrum disorder. In addition, that there are clear guidelines in place for children which they understand, particularly when they are spending time with their family members. Managers must ensure that there are contingency plans in place for children should any difficulties arise during this time.	
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered persons ensuring that all managers and staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children the home intends to care for and keep them safe. In particular, this relates to children who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and learning difficulties or disabilities. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	18 October 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))	18 October 2022

This specifically relates to the registered persons taking effective action to improve the recording processes in the home. In particular, this relates to children's records including any contact with family members. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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; 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. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	18 October 2022

Recommendation

- The registered persons should ensure that they and staff provide children with continued support to manage their emotions and feelings in relation to the impact of sudden unforeseeable changes to the staff team. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.12)

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: Emma Holden

Inspectors

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector

Nick Bennison, Social Care Inspector

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