

1241897

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for children with traumatic backgrounds and behavioural or mental health difficulties.

The registered manager left in December 2022. The current manager has been in post since December 2022 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 April 2023

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: 5 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/05/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. Since the last inspection in May 2022, three children have moved out. One child was supported to move on to a foster placement as part of a planned move. Despite a planned move into the home, and due to unpredicted changes of need for another child, the staff could not meet the child's needs and the child moved to another home operated by the organisation. The third child moved on to a more suitable provision for them.

Children's moves to the home have been planned and thought out. One child's social worker complimented the child's staged move into the home. The group impact risk assessment for the current group considered the relevant information. This planning enables staff to organise the support that the children will need.

The staff build positive relationships with children. Children have enjoyed activities that they have chosen. One child went to their first live concert this year and said that they 'loved it'. Another child went to a transgender event in London, which they enjoyed. Giving children the opportunity to take part in events that they have chosen helps them to build their identity.

Staff support children to access education. The staff work with the virtual school's headteacher and the child's education provider. Education plans are tailored to each child's individual needs.

The home has an in-house psychologist. She offers individual sessions to children and staff. The psychologist attends team meetings and offers the team guidance. She is working with the manager to increase the team's resilience and encourage reflective practice.

The front door has an electronic fob to enable it to open. The children do not have fobs and therefore cannot open the door. There is a general assessment for this door being locked. However, this is not individual to each child, and there is no written consent in children's files. Therefore, it is unclear why this is necessary for each child, and it is unclear who has agreed to it.

The home is generally decorated to an adequate standard and there are areas that are homely. However, the interior doors slam loudly when they close. On one occasion, a child was woken up during the night because of the loud doors. The staff wear lanyards with their identification cards on. These elements detract from the homely environment.

The garden has a very sloped surface. This results in an area that is not easily accessible for children to play in. There are plans to make this a more usable space; however, this problem was noted at the last inspection.

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

Staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and know the safeguarding procedures. Consultations with the local authority designated officer happen quickly, and all actions have been carried through. Having a strong safeguarding foundation in the home helps to protect children from harm.

The manager and staff took action following a significant but unpredicted incident for one child to review the child's supervision levels. Supervision levels have since been increased and there is a clear plan to enable staff to keep the child safe.

A social worker gave positive feedback on the level of support and planning by the home for a child with complex needs and risks.

The staff have shown commitment to a child who has been at the home since last year, despite some challenges. They are working with a wider team to create a plan of support. This helps to increase stability for children.

The children sometimes go missing from the home. The staff record a detailed account of each episode and they look for children and encourage them to return. An external professional spoke about staff genuinely caring and trying to help children to make positive changes. However, no return home interviews have been offered and there was no evidence of challenge to the placing local authority to request that these are carried out.

A police officer said that there are no safeguarding concerns for children when they are at the home. The officer said that communication about some aspects of the children's care could be improved so that police receive information more quickly.

The recruitment files evidence an ordered approach to staff recruitment. However, two agency staff's files do not contain all the relevant information.

The use of physical intervention is infrequent, with three incidents since the last inspection. Supporting records describe the incidents. The team has up-to-date training. However, there were two occasions when the child and/or staff were not offered debriefs and a record of a debrief that did happen did not include the dates of the debriefs. This does not enable accurate scrutiny and oversight of these incidents.

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

The manager is new in post. She has applied to register with Ofsted and she has the relevant qualifications for the role.

Important information is missing from a range of records. Placement plans have not been updated in all areas. The locality risk assessment has not been fully updated. Risk assessments and debriefs following incidents do not contain the dates. One

child's legal name was not clearly visible on the child's documents. This fails to ensure that staff have up-to-date information to care for the children.

The independent person's reports have not been sent to Ofsted on time. Some notifications have also been sent to Ofsted late. This fails to ensure that Ofsted receives important information about the children living at the home.

The manager can identify the strengths and challenges for the home. There are plans in place to move things forward. There has been a recent recruitment drive, and new members of staff have joined the team. Due to high staffing ratios for one child, there is a high use of agency staff. Having a full complement of staff will ensure that children receive consistent care.

The staff have undertaken the organisation's mandatory training, and the manager has identified areas for further training.

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 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)) This particularly refers to a range of records that were missing updates; they had not been signed and dated, and one child's legal name was not clear in their records.	1 June 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, ensure that the independent person's reports and notifications of significant incidents are sent to HMCI within reasonable time frames.	1 June 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. It should be homely. In particular, the registered person should prevent doors from slamming shut and review the use of lanyards and ensure that the garden is adapted and levelled to provide suitable use of the area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home are only made when they are intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, properly recorded and kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint enable the staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. In particular, the records should include the dates of debriefs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, agency staff checks must be evidenced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1241897

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

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

Responsible individual: Benjamin Harper

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

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