

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 a full-time treatment programme over 12 to 15 months for children with traumatic backgrounds, behavioural or mental health difficulties, and who have either experienced or are at risk of exploitation.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 May 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: Following an interim inspection in January 2022, Ofsted served a compliance notice in relation to the protection of children. At the monitoring visit on 8 February 2022, the compliance notice was found to be met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/01/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2020	Full	Good
11/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. The children's overall experiences are positive, and they are beginning to make some progress from their starting points. Children spoken with during the inspection provided good feedback about staff and said that they enjoy spending time with them.

The staff facilitate a range of experiences that reflect the children's interests and hobbies. These include visits to theme parks, roller skating and caravan holidays. Children have had opportunities to join boxing, horse riding and youth clubs. The wide range of activities help children to develop their friendship networks and increase their well-being.

Children's views are regularly sought and contribute to the everyday running of the home. Effective house meetings and one-to-one sessions are responsive to the individual needs of each child. As a result, children make themselves understood and make informed choices.

The staff are well trained in therapeutic approaches. A consultant psychologist works closely with the children, their families and the staff. For some children, this includes support for family reunification. The staff ensure that links are established to meet children's primary health needs. However, one child who vapes has not been helped to seek smoking cessation support. This means that there is a delay in the child receiving the service that they need.

The staff work hard to provide a welcoming, spacious and stimulating environment. The children have contributed significantly to the design of the communal areas, including working with local artists to create appealing murals. A thoughtful and creative approach to the layout of the home has resulted in a cinema and sensory room which meet children's interests. However, the garden is limited in size and the ground surface is uneven, which results in a space that is not easily accessible to or enjoyed by children.

Children's educational progress is not supported well enough. One child's attendance to school has decreased recently and two children do not have a suitable education arrangements. For the children who are not attending school, staff encourage educational activities at the home. However, this is not consistent and, at times, children have poor routines. These routines do not support their confidence and reintroduction to education. The manager has raised concerns with placing authorities and education professionals. However, the manager has failed to escalate the concerns or explore other options such as independent advocacy. This means that not all routes to support children's education have been fully explored and gaps remain.

Children's placement plans are not always completed promptly or kept up to date. Poor oversight of children's plans means that placement objectives and important routines for children might not be fully understood or clear to staff.

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

Children who were previously subject to exploitation are now safer. Well-planned one-to-one sessions cover important and emerging topics. These include exploring the impact of substance misuse, safe internet use, understanding healthy relationships and risks in the community. This enhances the children's knowledge of personal safety.

Staff are skilled and experienced in dealing with self-harming behaviours. Although there have been some incidents of self-harm, the frequency of these incidents is notably reducing over time.

There are detailed individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans in place. They cover a range of risks and behaviours and include individual strategies that staff use to support the children. Incentives are used to encourage positive behaviour, and sanctions are used proportionately and appropriately.

The staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, and they have good knowledge of whistle-blowing procedures. Investigations into allegations against staff are shared with the appropriate agencies and are handled consistently and fairly. This provides assurances that there are suitable systems to safeguard children.

There are clear missing-from-home protocols for children. When incidents occur, the staff work effectively with a wider network of professionals to ensure that the children return safely. Proactive support from the staff and their established relationships with children have meant that these incidents have reduced.

Monitoring of health and safety arrangements is effective. This area of practice has greatly improved. The staff checks have increased in scope and regularity. These checks ensure that any potential hazards are quickly identified and responded to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. He is supported by an established deputy manager. Together, they instil a positive child-focused culture, which is reflected by the staff and evident throughout the home.

Staff value the manager's commitment, knowledge and approachability. They say that they feel supported well. Regular supervision and good-quality training equip staff with the skills to meet the children's individual needs.

Children are supported by a consistent and motivated staff team. Staff morale is high and staff retention has improved. This has provided stability and good continuity of care for children.

The children's records are generally well organised and include their views. However, managerial evaluations in sanction records are not clearly documented, which reduces the monitoring and oversight in these important records.

External monitoring needs improvement. The independent person has not included regular consultation with children, their families or placing authorities. Consequently, these views are not explored in the visits and the additional safeguards intended are not realised.

The manager is aware of the areas for development and has a detailed action plan in place to address these.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) In particular, managers must escalate their concerns to placing authorities when children's education needs are not being met.	10 June 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	31 May 2022
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))	10 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the garden is adapted and levelled to ensure 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 children are enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, children should be supported to regain their confidence in education and be engaged in consistent structured

activities. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to support children to understand the dangers of smoking vaping products and help them to stop by referring them to specialist health teams. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: Olubunmi Fabusuyi

Registered manager: Kian Tracey

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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