

1256660

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and support for up to five children who may have learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural needs. This is one of several children's homes operated by a private provider.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 June 2021

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: 21 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following a full inspection on 21 April 2021, Ofsted served two compliance notices in respect of the help and protection of children and the leadership and management of the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/04/2021	Full	Inadequate
27/02/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/04/2019	Full	Good
01/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

This inspection identified some shortfalls in help and protection and leadership and management. This means that, despite the positive support that the children receive from the staff, the home has been judged overall as requires improvement to be good.

The staff deliver individualised care that meets the children's particular and complex needs. As a result, the children have made significant progress from their starting points. The children are positive about their experiences of life at this home and the things that they enjoy, such as going to the cinema, bouncing on the trampoline and learning to play the guitar.

The staff are committed to the children and want them to do well. The children enjoy a stable, settled home where they feel nurtured and well cared for by the staff. The children have developed strong relationships with the staff, who know them very well.

One young person has been supported to move on in a planned way to a local adult home where they will be able to complete their education. Most of the children have suitable education arrangements and the staff support the children to make the most of these. The staff have liaised with the local authority to try to secure suitable education arrangements for a child who more recently moved in. The staff help the children with their learning and development outside of the school day through sensory activities, encouragement to increase their life skills, and support with any work set by school. One child continues to enjoy their home recycling monitor responsibilities and their guitar lessons.

When children move in to the home, the staff ensure that they are quickly registered with local primary healthcare services. The staff promote healthy lifestyles through encouraging the children to make healthier food choices and enjoy exercise.

The provider has made some changes to the accommodation arrangements at the home. One of the previous communal lounges has been changed to a child's bedroom. This better meets the needs of this child. However, this reduces the communal space available for other children. The provider is in the process of reorganising the use of some first-floor rooms to provide a smaller second 'chill-out' area. This is not currently a matter of concern as the home is providing accommodation to three children. The provider has advised that they wish to apply for a reduction in the number of children they accommodate. The provider has undertaken some redecoration works to improve the building. The children's books, toys and games are accessible in the lounge and the paddling pool and trampoline in the garden make the home feel welcoming and child friendly.

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

Ofsted served a compliance notice in respect of the help and protection of children following the last inspection. The provider has met the steps set out in the compliance notice.

Risk is now appropriately managed and the children feel safer and happier in their home. However, on occasion, risk assessments do not detail the protective actions that staff take to reduce risk. Furthermore, there are no individualised written protocols for staff to follow should a child go missing from the home. These shortfalls mean that there is a lack of consistent and clear guidance for staff.

The children have complex behavioural and communication needs. There are no concerns in respect of how staff attempt to understand the communication expressed by behaviour, or how they respond to behaviour. However, one child's individual behaviour support plan is not up to date and does not guide staff effectively in the actions that they should take to support the child.

Sleep-in staff are the only staff on site at night. However, many of these staff have not had the opportunity to practise, or received suitable guidance in, how they would safely evacuate the home at night in the event of a fire.

Senior managers in the organisation have overseen an effective drive to address concerns about a previously developing closed culture. The staff describe receiving improved training, supervision and team meetings, all of which have encouraged regular reflection on whistle-blowing and safeguarding. As a result, the staff are now more confident and clear about the procedures for reporting concerns to senior managers in the organisation or external professionals.

The deputy manager has reviewed medication arrangements and improved the safety of these. All staff who administer medication have written competency assessments. Medication audits are carried out regularly and clear written protocols are now in place for giving (PRN) medication as and when required.

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

Ofsted served a compliance notice in respect of the leadership and management of the home following the last inspection. The provider has met the steps set out in the compliance notice.

The registered manager has been absent from the home since 28 April 2021. In her absence, the day-to-day management of the home has been undertaken by the deputy manager with support from other senior managers in the organisation.

The partnership working between the managers and staff has helped the provider to begin to address the many shortfalls identified at the last inspection. However, some requirements and recommendations have been restated.

Managers have reviewed the induction and initial training process for new staff to ensure that these suitably equip new staff for their roles. The staff receive a range of suitable training. Updates in areas such as behaviour management, autism awareness and alternative communication are scheduled.

Staffing arrangements have significantly improved and there are sufficient staff on duty. However, at night, there continue to be some occasions when inexperienced staff who have not completed their probationary period are rostered to work together or with an agency member of staff without a substantive or senior staff member on duty. This means that staff may potentially be less able to deal with any complex situations that may occur.

The management of records at the home has improved. Staff are now much more involved in record-keeping and are now familiar with important records. The records held are now clearer and they better evidence the day-to-day care provided. However, there continue to be some records that are undated and unsigned or require updating.

Internal and external monitoring arrangements have improved. The provider has arranged for other managers to support the deputy and staff at the home. This has helped the provider to understand the areas for development as well as the strengths. The staff have welcomed this additional support and drive for improvement. The staff feel better supported and motivated and are more confident in their roles.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that the children's individual behaviour support plans are accurate and provide suitable guidance to staff.	19 July 2021
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff practise night emergency evacuations. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	21 June 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them and ensure that these are clearly documented in the child's risk management plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that there are clear individualised protocols for staff to follow should a child be missing from care or away from the home without permission. The protocols should guide staff on how to support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. In particular, ensure that a member of staff who has at least six months' experience and/or has successfully completed their probation is always on duty. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording and that records management systems are effective. ('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: 1256660

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: Sally-Anne Slade-Watts

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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