

1256660

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered with Ofsted to provide care and support for up to five children who may have learning disabilities. This is one of several children's homes operated by this private provider.

The acting manager has been in post since October 2018. He has submitted an application for registration, which is being processed.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 April 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 November 2018

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
01/11/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children's moves into the home are well planned despite them often needing to be managed within a short timeframe. The manager ensures that a full assessment is undertaken to establish whether the home can meet the child's needs. The well-being of the other children is considered when planning the admission of any new child. The children have settled well and are learning to live together in a group environment. The children are developing more awareness of their peers and starting to show some signs of empathy for and understanding of other people's needs.

The staff create a warm and nurturing home in which the children feel safe and settled. This is demonstrated by the children's interaction with each other and with staff. The children seek out the staff to play with them. A child said, 'All of the staff are nice. I like living here. It's all very good.' A child who often presents as very challenging in other environments rarely does so at this home. This is because of the positive relationships that he has developed with the staff. The staff understand and anticipate the children's needs, which promotes harmonious living. A parent said, '[My child] loves the staff. I can't speak highly enough of them.'

The children are well supported. They are starting to make small but individually significant progress from their starting points in various aspects of their lives. A social worker said, 'I could never imagine that [the child] would be going out all of the time to the park and bowling. The work that they [the staff] have done is literally amazing. It really warms my heart to see it.'

The staff provide the children with a variety of fun social and community-based activities that widen their horizons and help them improve their confidence and social skills. The children spoke animatedly about a recent visit to the circus, which they thoroughly enjoyed. A variety of sensory activities, games and books are used to both stimulate and calm the children. However, the home does not have a computer loaded with appropriate sensory and educational programmes that is accessible to the children. Consequently, opportunities to access potentially useful and engaging technological learning tools are missed.

Most of the children have families that are actively involved in the child's life. The staff encourage families to visit, which promotes the maintenance of these crucial relationships.

The staff advocate for each child's right to access suitable education, involving partner agencies when appropriate. However, children do not have access to independent advocacy to ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives.

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

The children feel safe and trust the staff. The staff understand that the children use behaviour as a means of communication. They seek to understand and anticipate each child's needs. The staff continually promote the children's communication skills using Makaton, sign language, symbols and other augmentative communication aids. Some children are therefore developing greater ability to make their needs known. The staff use praise, distraction and discussion to redirect negative and promote positive behaviour. This approach helps the children move on from their fixations and from behaviours that challenge. As a result, violent and negative behaviour reduces.

The staff undertake individual risk assessments for each of the children and develop personalised risk management plans. These risk management plans provide clear guidance to staff on how to best support the children. This is particularly relevant given the children's complex needs.

The staff have undertaken training in safeguarding disabled children. Safeguarding and whistle-blowing are regular discussion themes in staff meetings. Consequently, the staff are clear about their primary duty to safeguard the children and the whistle-blowing procedures.

The building is generally well maintained and provides a safe and suitable living environment for the children. However, the children are not able to maintain their own privacy in their bedrooms. This is because their bedroom doors do not have a lock that staff can override in the case of emergency. In addition, the children's care plans do not provide staff with clear and helpful guidance on how to safely and quickly evacuate the children in the event of a night-time emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The acting manager has high aspirations for the children and the home. He understands the strengths of the service and the areas for development. The acting manager has driven improvement at the home during the past five months. Most of the requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. As a result, the service has improved.

The acting manager leads the team in a child-focused way, ensuring that the children feel cared about and wanted. Appropriate staffing levels enable staff to deliver the responsive support that the children need. The staff are highly valued by parents and partner professionals, who refer to them as caring, warm and nurturing. A parent said, 'All of the staff are really lovely people who have a real compassion for the children.'

The staff feel well supported. They said that the manager and senior staff are always available. There is a variety of suitable and relevant training available, which most staff have undertaken.

Regular agency staff cover vacancies, which provides continuity of support for the

children. However, there is no formalised, documented induction for agency staff. This means that they may not be fully aware of the emergency evacuation processes, safeguarding procedures and the needs of individual children.

Internal and external quality assurance systems are not consistently robust. The manager's review of the quality of care does not demonstrate how children's views are sought or how their views influence service development. The independent person's reports do not give a sense of meaningful interaction with the children or observations of care. Many of the visits have been announced or have taken place when no children have been at the home. As a result, the visitor's ability to understand and comment on the effectiveness of the quality of care is undermined.

The home's statement of purpose is not a consistently accurate and helpful guide. The document refers to local towns, trainlines and attractions that do not exist locally, therapies that are not provided and models of care that staff are unfamiliar with. Furthermore, the document provides inaccurate information on the responsible individual and the number of children for whom the home is registered.

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.

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'.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1))	27/05/2019
In particular, ensure that all information contained in the statement of purpose is current and accurate.	
The registered person must ensure that—	13/05/2019
each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a))	
In particular, provide agency staff with a suitable induction.	

The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. 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; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. 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. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))	24/06/2019
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Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- In particular, ensure that each child's bedroom has a lock that staff can override in the case of emergency. Furthermore, ensure that each child has a personal plan that details how staff will safely evacuate the child in the event of a night-time emergency.

- All children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and when possible this should be provided by a person who the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact that the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256660

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Olubunmi Fabusuyi

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Joanna Heller, social care inspector

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