

1263201

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation owns and runs the home. Ofsted registered the home to provide care for up to four children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living at the home.

Ofsted registered the manager of the home in January 2023.

Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 19 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/10/2021	Full	Good
25/06/2019	Full	Good
01/10/2018	Full	Good
06/02/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There is a good focus on children's mental well-being in this home. The manager supports her carers to develop an awareness of the children's backgrounds. Children feel that their carers understand them. This has reassured children and enabled positive relationships to flourish in the home.

Several children have struggled with their school attendance. The manager has consistently sought support from the children's respective schools and local authorities. However, despite the organisation having ample educational resources, the care team has not done enough to better support children with their education. This has significantly stifled some children's learning.

Carers encourage children to personalise their bedrooms. This gives children a sense of pride and identity. However, communal rooms throughout the home lack soft furnishings and personalisation. Additionally, carers store snacks in the office, which children do not have access to without their carer's supervision. This depletes the manager's efforts around creating a family-oriented home.

There is a strong desire from the manager to set up effective working relationships with the children's respective families, and this is an area of strength. One of the children's family members stated that the carers were 'brilliant' and 'went the extra mile'. Carers make good efforts to ensure that children visit important family members, despite the distance. As a result, children have had the opportunity to strengthen bonds with their families.

There is good support for children to access all their health appointments. Carers have been persistent and reassuring when children have had anxieties around attending the dentist. These efforts have enabled children to access and receive help from attending various health appointments. In doing so, carers have taught children the importance of self-care.

Carers motivate children to pursue their interests. When children experience a lack of self-motivation or trepidation around developing their talents or interests, carers have been creative to support children to overcome these barriers. Therefore, some children have enjoyed fabulous experiences that have created life-long memories.

The manager ensures that children feel listened to and understood. When children raise important issues or make specific requests, the manager responds by writing an informal letter to the child. Additionally, carers encourage children to read and comment on the child's placement plan. This means that children feel that carers act on and value their opinions.

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

The manager has a good grasp of the children's vulnerabilities. Children's risk assessments focus on known areas of concern as well as vulnerable situations that are likely to evoke strong emotions from children. This demonstrates the manager's ability to anticipate risk. Therefore, this helps to better protect children from harm.

Carers are confident in what to do when children's whereabouts are not known. Carers know how to apply the child's missing-from-home management plan, which includes information on the child's network and the child's known areas of interest in the community. However, the manager has not followed the local missing-from-home protocol guidance. This could create unnecessary delay when reporting children as missing to the police.

Carers record incidents involving children with clarity and context. There is a clear flow of information through the home's recording systems, which shows the manager's efforts to create the means for children and carers to reflect on and learn from crisis situations and conflict. This process has supported the carer's ability to remain objective in their care of children throughout sustained periods of challenge.

When children's behaviours have merited a form of consequence, carers do not apply punitive measures. With the manager's guidance, carers encourage children to reflect and talk about their actions. This practice stems from the organisation adopting a specific therapeutic model of care. A therapist helps carers to remain curious and knowledgeable about the children's needs. This approach to care helps children to learn, recover and maintain positive relationships.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager oversees a committed and dedicated team of carers. The manager has good leadership skills and has instilled a culture of learning among her team. The manager ensures that her carers delve into the children's circumstances to ensure that carers better understand the children that they look after. However, given the manager's short leadership spell at the home, the manager has not yet embedded her aspirations for her team's care of the children.

The independent visitor provides good oversight of the care of the children. However, consultation with children's family members is poor. Additionally, neither the manager nor the responsible individual records their scrutiny of the independent visitor's findings. This dilutes the accountability and transparency of the manager's decision-making.

There are gaps in the frequency of some of the carer's supervision sessions, although this has improved since the manager started her role at the home. The quality of reflective supervision varies. This inhibits some carers in their personal development.

The referral process for children is thorough. There is good evidence of consultation with children's local authorities and good collaboration with the respective social workers of the children currently living in the home. However, there is a lack of recording around the decision-making when the manager commits to care for a child. This diminishes the transparency around the manager's decision-making.

The manager keeps abreast of the carers' access to training and ensures that the carers' training reflects the home's statement of purpose. When the manager identifies knowledge gaps in the team, she accesses bespoke training to address any shortfalls. This reduces the risk of care practices becoming stagnant.

There are frequent team meetings at this home, with good attendance. It was notable to the inspectors that team meetings are child-focused. The manager uses team meetings to ensure that carers are knowledgeable about the children's evolving needs. This improves the quality and consistency of care for the children.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(viii)(x)(b))	1 March 2023

The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least one 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. 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) (5))	1 March 2023
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children and is a homely, domestic environment. The children's home must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. The registered person should also look at creative ways to better manage children's access to snacks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision enables staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's procedures take into account the views of appropriate local services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing persons' incidents in the area where the home is located. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.23)
- The registered person should ensure that they only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The registered person should make their decision-making and rationale clear when they commit to offer a child a placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 1263201

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Rebecca Maltby

Registered manager: Sarah Rodgers

Inspectors

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector
Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector

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