

1277045

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning difficulties. It is part of a large organisation. At the time of inspection three children were living in the home.

An acting manager is in post, who is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 August 2023

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: 21 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/09/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good
07/11/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is well presented. Walls are decorated with pictures of the children, their experiences and their family members. The home has been designed and adapted for the children who live there. The playroom and sensory room provide areas for children to relax in and have quiet time. Children's rooms are personalised and furnished in line with each child's individual needs. Outdoor spaces are well maintained. They offer children spaces to explore and play. There are plans to develop outdoor areas to further benefit the children.

Children living in the home make progress. This is primarily in relation to their ability to communicate and recognise and express feelings. Managers use different tools to monitor children's behaviours and progress; the outcome of this monitoring informs care planning. Feedback about children's progress from two social workers and two family members was positive. One parent said they saw progress in their child within four weeks of them moving into the home. Social workers and family members told the inspector that they receive good communication from carers.

Carers support children to maintain and build positive relationships with family members. They communicate with parents and professionals to ensure that family time is safe, in the child's best interests and meeting their needs. Carers have supported one child to make and send a video message to a parent. Carers continually add to attractive memory books for children.

Education is prioritised by the home. Carers communicate with the children's school on a daily basis. This allows for changes in behaviours to be monitored, achievements to be celebrated and concerns to be addressed. Carers constantly support the children to learn in the home through a variety of enjoyable activities.

Carers have supported a child to have a positive move into the home. Research and planning completed before the child moved in allowed carers to evaluate whether they could meet the child's needs. A pre-arranged meeting for children to meet in the community contributed to the assessment of whether the child may form positive relationships with another child living in the home. Information was shared with the child's prospective school, which led to the confirmation of a school place before the child's place in the home was confirmed.

Carers spend time with children to build positive and trusting relationships with them. The inspector observed carers being attentive to all the children and enabling them to have a voice. Carers showed a good understanding of the children's needs and how to meet them. The use of Makaton by carers supports children to communicate effectively. Children are supported to enjoy activities in the community and in the home.

Children's health needs are met. Monitoring of a child's behaviours led to carers questioning whether their prescribed medication was benefiting them. Carers then worked with education and health professionals to advocate for the child. Carers appropriately challenged others with the aim of achieving better outcomes for children. This resulted in changes to medication, leading to the child experiencing a better quality of life. In working to meet another child's health needs, carers sought guidance and advice from other professionals to support them to expand their knowledge.

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

Plans and risk assessments devised to support carers to care for children and keep them safe are clear and informative. They are personal to the child, providing good overall insight into the child's individual needs and behaviours. Examples of how to respond to children are clear; this is likely to promote consistency of care and support children to feel settled. At times, plans are repetitive. When plans are updated, dates are not recorded and old or irrelevant information may be prominent in documents. This may cause confusion for carers when following these plans.

Carers have good, meaningful and focused conversations with children. They consider the child's communication needs and stage of development and understanding. One carer used a child's favourite toy to help them to consider other people's feelings. Short stories and pictures that describe social situations are widely used to support children to understand day-to-day life and to prepare them for events and changes. Children have access to their social stories.

Children do not go missing. Planning for the possibility of a child going missing is thorough and reflects the children's extreme vulnerability. When children have walked away from the home, staff are responsive and act quickly to keep them safe.

A high number of incidents take place in the home. Carers use techniques such as distraction before considering restrictive actions. When restraint is used, it is appropriate. Carers' records of incidents make clear what was going on for the child and the actions carers have taken. Carers follow the guidance in children's plans. Children are usually spoken to after incidents. When a decision is made not to speak to a child, the reasons for this are clearly recorded. Management oversight of incidents is thorough and identifies areas of positive practice as well as areas where improvements could be made.

At times, carers are not able to prevent children from being hurt by other children living in the home. Children do not intentionally hurt their peers. Carers support children to understand their actions and how the other child may feel. This has led to a reduction in incidents between two children. Leaders and managers have worked to develop the service to allow them to support children with their sensory needs and their understanding, with the aim of promoting positive change. The addition of a clinical and well-being lead, clinical psychologist, occupational therapist and speech and language worker to the regional team aims to help managers and

carers to better understand and support children. This additional expertise will underpin care planning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current manager has been in the role for four weeks. She has not yet applied to be registered with Ofsted but intends to do so. Despite only working in the home for a short time, she has exceptional knowledge of the children who live there and the staff team. She acknowledges the need for some improvements in the home and is excited to begin making them. The manager is reflective and evidences her continual learning.

Leaders and managers care about their staff. They recognise that the home has gone through an exceedingly busy period and how this has impacted on the carers. They praise carers for their hard work and their evident dedication to the children. Carers have not always received debriefs, due to the number of incidents that have recently take place. In response to this, the manager has arranged additional supervisions with carers to provide any support and guidance they may require.

Carers feel supported by their leaders and managers. They say they receive good-quality supervision that meets their overall needs. Leaders and managers are visible in the home and available to carers. Carers know the children. They are passionate about their work and achieving good outcomes for children. The inspector observed a team of carers working to not only support children, but each other.

There is a focus on having a safe team of carers. Leaders and managers practise safer recruitment. Concerns in relation to carers' practice are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Leaders and managers complete thorough investigations and, when required, implement changes with the aim of improving practice and keeping children safe.

Team meetings are regular, well attended and well recorded. Actions and outcomes are clearly recorded. Managers and carers discuss all aspects of the home, with a clear focus on the children and development of practice.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

☐ The registered person should ensure that children and carers have access to specialist support, guidance and advice. This should contribute to care planning for children and should aim to improve the lived experiences and outcomes for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.10)

☐ The registered person should ensure that plans are regularly updated to ensure that important information is easily accessed by carers. In particular, updates should be clearly dated and information highlighting new or higher risks should be prominent in documents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

☐ The registered person should provide carers with timely debriefs following incidents that take place in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraphs 13.1 and 13.2)

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: 1277045

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: Samantha Choules

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Carla Simkiss, Social Care Inspector

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