

2593651

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care for up to four children who require care and support to deal with their social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered at the home since November 2022. However, he was away from the home during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 August 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: 24 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/08/2022	Full	Good
23/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. These relationships are the foundation of the team's practice, which helps children to feel safe and make progress.

Parents and professionals value the support and care provided to their children. One social worker said, 'They are doing all they can for [Name of child]. [Name of child's] outlook on life is better. Staff's relationships with children really shine through.' For some parents, this support extends beyond the care provided within the home. One parent said, 'They have really helped us. I don't know where we would have been without them.'

Staff strive to create positive childhood memories for children and enrich the children's daily lives through enjoyable experiences. Some children grow in confidence and foster their sense of empathy from caring for their own pets. Children also have fun and build self-esteem from their enjoyable experiences. Some children have enjoyed a holiday to the seaside and a holiday abroad to help build these positive memories.

Managers have escalated their concerns when some children have been without a school placement for a considerable time. Staff have promoted the children's education by providing alternative learning programmes when children have not been in school. Staff work on understanding the barriers to education and for some children started to build their confidence toward college and employment. This has led to children applying for a college placement and starting a part-time job.

Children are prepared for a future beyond the home through a programme of support that helps them to develop their independence skills. Children develop their knowledge and skills on how to stay safe, cooking, budgeting and independent travel. Staff keep in touch with children after they leave the home to maintain an important avenue of support as children make their transition to adulthood.

Regular conversations with the children about finding less destructive ways to deal with conflict have helped them to live together more harmoniously. For one child in particular, these restorative conversations have helped them to grow in confidence and find their voice within the group.

Children's health needs are generally well met. However, individual support for children who smoke has not been effective in helping them to consider healthier lifestyle choices.

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

Over time, the children's risks reduce as a result of living at this home. The relationships they forge with staff provide them with a place and a sense of safety. Children said they feel safe in the care of the staff team. One child said, 'Staff help me when I'm upset. I feel safe living here.'

Restraint is not common practice. When it has occurred, staff have used it in the best interest of the children. Children are supported by staff with reflective conversations to help them think about their experience. This enables them to share a concern if need be and consider alternative ways of coping with difficult emotions. For some children, this approach has reduced the frequency and intensity of incidents.

Managers follow safeguarding procedures when concerns are raised about staff practice. This allows external agencies to have oversight of the managers' actions and ensure that children are safeguarded. The use of the provider's internal safeguarding team offers an additional layer of scrutiny and strengthens the home's safeguarding practice.

Police attendance at the home has not always been proportionate to the incident. However, the quality of the manager's post-incident review ensures that shortfalls in practice are identified and support is given to staff. The use of reflective practice is helping to develop staff's decision-making, but this has not yet been embedded.

The staff's response to when a child left the home without authorisation lacked curiosity. They did not sufficiently explore the child's safety. The response from managers offered reassurance that appropriate action to unpick the practice shortfalls would be taken.

The provider uses safer recruitment practice. However, interview notes completed by the recruiting managers do not always show how their evaluation of suitability is reached.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The management team provides strong leadership to the staff. In the absence of the registered manager, the deputy manager showed a comprehensive understanding of the children's needs. This knowledge is disseminated to the team to create a shared awareness about the experiences and progress of the children.

A positive team culture helps staff to feel confident in work and have a positive learning environment. Staff's healthy relationships extend into how they care for the children. This helps children to feel safe and well cared for.

New members of staff said they have quickly settled and have a voice within the team. Regular supportive conversations, training and inclusive practice help new staff to have this sense of acceptance.

Staff receive practice-related supervision to support them to be effective in their roles. Informal and formal processes are used to address practice shortfalls when standards do not meet the expectations of the management team.

Team meetings give managers a forum for reflection and an opportunity to keep staff informed about practice developments. A variety of subjects are discussed, from keeping children safe to the importance of teamwork and having a good team morale. This is helping to upskill staff's practice.

Children's records are well organised. This supports managers to have easier oversight of the quality of care for children. The quality of records also enables children to have a better understanding of their time living at the home, should they use their records to help them look back at their experiences.

Children's complaints are taken seriously. One child said, 'If I have a complaint, I can speak to anyone about it.' Children are confident in knowing that they will be listened to by the adults who care for them should they have a concern.

The home provides children with lots of space in which to live and relax. Most areas of the home are well decorated and homely, with the exception of the space outside of the children's bedrooms. More could be done to improve the environment to ensure that children have a comforting experience when leaving their bedrooms.

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, The 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi) (b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that: staff take appropriate action when concerns are raised about the children's whereabouts; and support from the police is only required when risks and concerns warrant the intervention.	7 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should make sure that the children's home provides a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular, the space outside of the children's bedrooms should be decorated to a high standard, with additional personalisation. This will ensure that high standards exist throughout

the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered manager should review the effectiveness of their intervention with regard to helping children with their health needs. In particular, supporting children to stop smoking. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered manager should review the practice for recording interview notes to strengthen their evidence about how they evaluate the suitability of a new staff member. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 2593651

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Donna Carlin

Registered manager: Kristopher Noble

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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