

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 owned and managed by a private provider. It offers care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2024.

Three children were living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 21 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/10/2024	Full	Good
08/08/2023	Full	Good
24/08/2022	Full	Good
23/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Managers do not consider whether staff can meet the needs of a new child moving into the home. Staff morale has been affected, and this has had an impact on the care children receive. Managers do not consider the needs of the existing children and the impact a new child could have on them. This has been at a time when staff are feeling unsupported and have reported that they need additional help to continue to do their job effectively.

There has been a spike in incidents of children going missing from the home, being left in unsafe situations, using self-harming behaviours and causing harm to each other. This is due to a lack of staff supervision.

Children lack routines and boundaries, and they receive inconsistent messages from staff. For example, one child can only access their phone until 11pm, whereas the other child can access her phone 24 hours a day. Furthermore, staff are ineffective in helping one child have a structured daily routine, often resulting in the child sleeping until the afternoon.

Children's general day-to-day health needs are being met. However, children do not regularly see the dentist or optician, and until recently, health assessments were not being completed. The manager and staff are not being creative in identifying ways to encourage children to attend health appointments.

Only one child is attending an educational setting. The other children have not attended school or college for the past seven or eight months. One child, who is undergoing a clinical assessment, attends an animal sanctuary once a week as a form of informal education.

Children take part in a variety of activities with staff, such as going to theme parks, cheerleading and bowling. One child can spend time in the community with friends.

The home environment is enriched by a variety of displayed photos of the children and staff. Children can personalise their bedrooms to their liking; however, there was a noticeable difference in comfort between two of the children's bedrooms.

When children move on from the home, the plans are thorough and well executed, and children leave with positive memories.

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

Children are not always safe in the home. Children have been left in harmful situations, and children have caused harm to each other due to a lack of supervision from staff. A social worker said, 'I am concerned about the spike in incidents, and the staff are not

working in a therapeutic manner. They are just dealing with crisis and firefighting. I worry about the lack of supervision of the children.'

Staff have become frustrated with children, have shouted at them and have called them names. The contributory factor is the lack of sleep staff are experiencing because children are up late at night. There has been a lack of management consideration of alternative ways of supporting children during this time to help them have better sleep routines.

There has been a lack of professional curiosity, and staff have completed no checks to look at what a child is accessing on their laptop. Staff were of the view that they only had to check the child's phone. The child had been researching how to break a window restrictor and how to safely exit a second-storey window. The child went missing from home overnight, and staff were unaware of their disappearance from the home until the following morning.

There has been an increase in children going missing from home. Staff follow the individual missing-from-home protocols and work alongside partner agencies to ensure a swift return. When children have been missing from home, they are offered independent interviews when they return, but some choose not to engage.

When children display self-harming behaviours, they get a good response from staff; however, some of these incidents are not always recorded efficiently. Staff seek advice from health services, and at times, paramedics have been sent to the home to assist.

When allegations are made, the manager appropriately investigates these, and the children and their families are informed of the outcomes.

Children are rarely physically held, and when they are, the physical intervention is appropriate and used for a minimal amount of time to keep the child and others safe. Staff's recordings of these are detailed and thorough.

Managers have not always consistently notified Ofsted in a timely manner when a serious incident has taken place. The manager does not take responsibility for the shortfalls when she is not present in the home. Furthermore, there is a lack of management support for staff when the registered manager is on leave from the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

At times, there has been a lack of leadership and lack of responsibility for the monitoring and oversight of the home when the manager is absent.

Staffing is an ongoing problem, with one third of the workforce being vacant posts. The manager seeks support for her staff; however, has not always received help in a timely way for herself if this has been requested.

Due to staffing issues, the manager has had to support the staff to care for the children. This then takes her away from her job of managing the home on a day-to-day basis, which then results in delays in management oversight.

The home's recording is currently being transferred over to a new computer system. This has resulted in staff recording information in various ways, which causes confusion and makes it difficult for the manager to be consistent in her responses.

Staff do receive supervision, although at times this can be late. A new member of staff is still to receive her supervision session, and there is not a date yet identified for it. If practice issues are identified, the manager offers support to discuss an action plan to improve practice.

Team meetings take place monthly, and they are well attended. Staff receive training, although it is currently impossible for the manager to track and monitor staff training and development. This is due to a change in the computer systems. This means that the manager cannot easily identify which staff is up to date with their knowledge about children who go missing from home, self-harm and ligature use. Given that these are the current prevalent risks, the manager cannot be assured that staff are able to keep the children safe.

One member of staff said, 'I am feeling unsupported in my job. Everybody is feeling burnout, and the last few weeks have been a struggle.'

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(b))	9 July 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	9 July 2025

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(f)(h))

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: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen
B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Donna Carlin

Registered manager: Marie Brown

Inspector

Angela Ross, Social Care Inspector

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