

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 and managed. It provides care for up to four children who require care and support to deal with their emotional difficulties.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We visited this setting on 16 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress. Children feel a sense of belonging as they gain acceptance, attention and support from staff. Children's needs are met by the staff. One child said, 'I initially kept myself to myself, but I was able to quickly speak to adults here, because it just feels like a home. I do not want to move from this home.'

Education arrangements prevent children from achieving their full potential. With the correct education provision, children are academically able to achieve GCSE qualifications. The manager understands the barriers to children's learning and advocates for them. Further exploration into education provisions is necessary to ensure that the children's individual educational needs are met.

Children receive guidance and support to lead a healthier lifestyle. The staff, in partnership with other professionals, help the children to preserve and restore their mental and physical health. Children continue to smoke tobacco despite the implications to their health. The staff encourage children to accept the support from specialist agencies and explore treatments to help them to quit smoking. Illegal drug misuse by the children is also responded to through the involvement of specialist support services.

Children usually experience a planned move into the home. However, one child did move into the home when it was evident that another child was unsettled and targeting their aggression at staff and peers. The manager revised the home's statement of purpose to reflect the short-term placement needs of this child. The decision remained that a child was moved into an unsettled home with a child who was already struggling with group living. This was detrimental to the children's progress.

The work undertaken with the children prepares them to move on from this home. Children develop their skills and confidence through individualised independence training. This programme is designed to address the child's individual risks, worries and needs. Relationships do not have to end when children move out from this home. This approach gives children security.

Children see their families and staff help them to repair and maintain these relationships. Parents see and appreciate the progress that their children are making. One parent said, 'My daughter is thriving, I could not wish for a better placement.'

Children have the opportunity to enjoy new experiences. They are involved in the decision-making and planning of activities and hobbies. The children consider the likes of their peers when planning group activities. The home is accepted within the small local community and, together with the staff, the children are involved in

community fundraising events. This supports children's sense of inclusion and self-esteem.

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

Children's risks are reducing as they now make informed positive choices. Children are routinely provided with learning and guidance to help them to understand the potential risks to their safety and how to better protect themselves.

The children talk about their fears and worries and are confident to disclose any concerns and incidents to staff. Disclosures include historic incidents of abuse, but also fresh concerns about staff conduct. Children are listened to and the manager ensures information is shared and investigated. As a result, action is taken to ensure that children are safe.

Children's missing from home incidents have reduced. When children do go missing, the staff take immediate action to find them and help them to return safely. Given the complexities of risk for the children, the police are called to help staff to locate the children. This promotes children's safety and welfare. One child said, 'I do not need to go missing any more. I like this home and I do not want to be moved.'

Children who have been at risk of exploitation are developing their understanding of these risks. Children have demonstrated that they can stay safe as they make positive and safe choices. This is underpinned by risk assessments and plans to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Safety plans are developed in consultation with the children. Children help the staff to identify and devise strategies that reduce the child's risk of future harm. The plan belongs to the child and the manager ensures that the child has their copy. The plan helps the child to manage their mental health by providing practical distraction techniques and strategies.

Risk management procedures to address risk-taking behaviours are underpinned by a competing number of risk assessments. The recording within these assessments is inconsistent and inaccurate. This could lead to ineffective or inappropriate action being taken by the staff. The manager does ensure that the staff are aware of the children's risks through routine reflective discussions and supervisions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is led by a manager who has a clear vision for the home. She is highly motivated and invested in the development of the staff. The staff feel supported by the manager, and the children say that they 'love' living in this home. The atmosphere is both warm and nurturing.

The manager and staff engage well with other agencies. Feedback from professionals and families is positive, as they identify the progress that the children are making.

Children form positive relationships with the staff, although a number of staff have recently left the home. Children report that they do get upset when staff leave and, worryingly, one child said, 'This is what should be expected in care.' Recruitment of staff has been difficult during the pandemic. Recruitment processes have been reviewed and adapted to support the appointment of staff. Leaders and managers have stopped new admissions until staffing vacancies are filled. This helps to create a stable environment for children.

Only the managers in this home have the necessary qualifications. Predominantly, staff were previously appointed with no prior experience or qualifications relating to children's residential care. The majority of these staff have since left the job, choosing other forms of employment. The manager understands that, to improve the outcomes for children, they need staff who have the necessary knowledge and skills.

The manager's organisation of staff records is good, and pre-employment safeguarding checks are completed appropriately. However, there are some shortfalls in information being accurately recorded. For example, certificates of staff qualifications are not consistently available, and some staff inductions have not been signed off.

An electronic recording system is being implemented. At the current stage of development, it is difficult to find and review specific information about the children, for example when they had free time with friends. The children's records are currently a mixture of paper and electronic. A 'grab sheet' has been created to provide staff with a quick overview of each child. However, some pertinent and relevant information is missing from these records. This potentially has an impact on how staff care for 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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(h))	2 February 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	2 February 2022
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a))	2 February 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, that they and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time

education as soon as possible. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 28 paragraph 5.15)

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 BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Rebecca Maltby

Registered manager: Rebecca Stewart

Inspectors

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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