

2613649

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to four children aged 7 to 13 with social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 12 December 2022.

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2025

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: 9 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/08/2023	Full	Good
03/08/2022	Full	Good
13/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, no children have moved in or out of the home. The inspector met all four children. Interactions between children and staff were positive. There is a warmth across the home and children present as comfortable in what they clearly feel is 'their' environment.

Children experience good-quality care. All children have made progress from their starting points. Staff know children well and have a good knowledge of children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Each child has a long-term care plan. All children have lived in the home for at least 18 months, including two children for over three years.

Staff support children's education. All children have additional learning needs, including neurodiversity. Each child attends a different school, some of which are out of area, as the managers have worked with local authorities to ensure each child is in a setting which supports their individual need. All children's school attendance is high. Each child has made a notable achievement, for example receiving certificates or awards. One child is soon to go on a residential trip with staff assistance, following careful planning to ensure the child is well supported.

Children's views are listened to and acted on. There is evidence of children's voices in their plans and daily records, such as in regular 'I want/I need' records. Children's moods and feelings are also captured, which helps staff and managers to evaluate how children feel. This is particularly helpful given the children's ages.

Children's health and well-being are well promoted. Staff understand children's physical needs well, and ensure children have access to necessary local services. Healthy day-to-day routines and diets are encouraged. There is an effective medication management system in place.

Staff place emphasis on supporting children's emotional well-being. Staff have therapeutic training and the home's therapeutic approach is well embedded. Children and staff have additional support from a consultant psychologist. Staff and leaders also work with other professionals. For example, the manager and a local authority support worker have worked jointly with one child to complete detailed life-story work.

The home is well decorated and well furnished. Some areas, such as hallways, have full-size hand-painted murals, and other shared spaces are child friendly in decor. Children's rooms are of a good size and can be decorated to their tastes. However, the garden lawn, while a good size, has not been well maintained and this detracts from the otherwise homely environment.

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

Children are safeguarded and supported to be safe. Staff know their safeguarding responsibilities and understand whistle-blowing procedures.

Staff and managers encourage positive behaviour. Children receive regular praise and achievements are recognised. Staff frequently have meaningful conversations with children and cover a variety of areas. Incentives, including use of a 'pom-pom' reward system, offer well-judged rewards when children meet targets and goals. These goals are realistic and individual to each child.

Consequences are issued infrequently, and records show they are proportionate and restorative in nature. Staff are helped by behaviour support and 'wellness' plans which are individualised and comprehensive, but concise. These measures help children learn to develop positive behaviours.

Incidents do occur but records are well kept, and even minor incidents are reviewed by a senior member of staff. Staff use physical intervention infrequently and as a last resort. Restraints, when they do occur, are proportionate and justified. Staff have training on appropriate restraint techniques. There is a strong focus on using de-escalation techniques. There is good evidence of management oversight and debriefs take place.

There have been no missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. However, the missing-from-care protocols are in place for individual children. The staff and managers were able to talk through how they would respond should a child go missing from the home.

Fire and safety checks are conducted routinely. Fire drills take place regularly and all children have personal emergency evacuation plans. Health and safety risks are monitored and managed effectively.

Staff have access to risk assessments. Plans and assessments are comprehensive and detailed; however, they are not always updated regularly and do not therefore reflect a child's current circumstances. Parts of some risk assessments were not individualised. Without up-to-date and accurate information about children's risks and support measures, there is a risk staff will not respond effectively to children's behaviour when incidents occur.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified. Staff speak positively about the manager and her support for the staff team. The manager has also appointed a deputy, of whom staff also speak positively. There is a good working relationship among all senior staff. The manager, deputy manager and responsible individual have good expectations and aspirations and have learned from the findings of the last inspection and taken effective action to address the issues found.

Staff feedback has been positive. Staff support and trust each other, and staff speak positively about the children they care for. New staff said that they feel supported by more senior staff members and can ask questions without fear.

Supervision takes place monthly for staff. Staff speak about supervision positively as an open and reflective forum where they can raise problems without fear. The home also holds regular team meetings, which include input from a psychotherapist. These have helped staff to deliver a therapeutic approach to care for children effectively.

Staff have access to comprehensive training. Additional and ongoing training is also explored which is specific to the needs of the children, for example training on neurodiversity and on therapeutic parenting.

Feedback from a range of external professionals is consistently excellent. This includes responses from social workers, independent reviewing officers, education staff and a therapy professional. The manager and staff have developed excellent relationships with a network of local professionals and agencies.

The home has seen a relatively high staff turnover. Subsequently, the staff team has stabilised. The manager, deputy and responsible individual have worked to improve the staff culture and build a positive ethos at the home. However, two staff members have been dismissed for concerns relating to their conduct since the last inspection. The managers' response to the concerns once they became aware has been robust and diligent. However, staff selection, training and support have not prevented these incidents occurring.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they monitor and review the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, including when staff are dismissed, and be able understand and where possible, address any negative trends. In particular, review the recruitment procedures and training to identify any improvements that could be made to ensure that staff appointed are of integrity and good character and are mentally and physically for the role. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)
- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home are well maintained. In particular, ensure that the garden lawn is in good condition so that children can enjoy the garden. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. In particular, risk assessments should be updated regularly and accurately to ensure staff know how to respond to children's risks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: 2613649

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor SL4 1EG

Responsible individual: Benjamin Harper

Registered manager: Karen Peskett

Inspector

Daniel Rankin, Social Care Inspector

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