

2680559

Registered provider: New Path Residential Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home registered with Ofsted in July 2022. The home provides care for up to four female children who may have experienced childhood trauma and have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted at the time the home opened.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Not previously inspected

Inspection type**Inspection judgement**

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This inspection was brought forward to address specific concerns received by Ofsted. There was one child living at the home at the time of this inspection. Another child's placement had recently ended unexpectedly following a serious incident.

Managers do not ensure that children are cared for by staff who are suitably trained and experienced. Children are not consistently cared for in line with their care plans or assessment of risk. Inconsistencies and division in the management team have negatively affected staff's confidence when supporting children through difficult periods. This compromises children's safety and well-being.

Staff and managers do not have a joined-up approach. They do not work together to encourage positive behaviour. A senior manager offered a child a reward but did not make clear what the child needed to do to achieve it. Staff were unaware of the targets and the part that they play in helping the child to achieve these.

Children have made progress in improving their attendance at school or education placements. Staff encourage children to take part in enrichment activities and maintain contact with their family.

A social worker said that their child is settling at the home. The social worker considered this as progress after several placement breakdowns. Children have made progress with developing their independence skills, which includes cooking and doing their own laundry.

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

Managers have not arranged rosters to ensure that there are enough suitably trained and experienced staff on duty. Very recently, the staff on duty for two successive evenings had only been employed for only a few weeks and had not completed any induction training. They had not received training in areas such as safeguarding or the risks of criminal or sexual exploitation. There was no qualified first aider on shift as required.

When a very vulnerable child went missing from care overnight, the inexperienced and untrained staff on duty did not know the processes to call the police and social care without delay. The staff were not familiar with the child's missing-from-care plan and did not search for the child or make enquiries to places that the child was known to visit. When the staff called for support, the on-call manager did not respond until the next day. An off-duty manager was called for support. However, they were not familiar with the child's care plan and did not direct staff to search for the child. The off-duty manager who responded had not completed any induction

training either. When the child returned to the home, staff did not explore with them where they had been or their reasons for leaving. This was a missed opportunity for staff to gather important information that could help to reduce the likelihood of further incidents or help the child to return to the home sooner.

Staff do not understand that children's positive behaviour support plans must be followed to maintain children's well-being and safety. Staff did not follow one child's agreed plan for access to their mobile phone and chose to withhold it from the child as a consequence. The child did not understand the reasons for this, which caused them to become very distressed. This resulted in police involvement and the child's placement ending.

Staff's understanding of safeguarding children is poor. One child was allowed by staff to buy an age-restricted video game while under staff supervision. They were able to play this game for several days under the supervision of staff before the registered manager saw this and took action. The incident was not considered to be a safeguarding concern. No action was taken, and safeguarding professionals were not informed.

Half of the staff team has not completed training in positive behaviour support and restrictive physical interventions. When incidents of physical interventions have occurred, debriefs have not always taken place with staff as required.

Serious incidents of a child going missing have not been notified to Ofsted or have been notified late. The manager failed to notify Ofsted of an incident during which police attended and used restraint on a child.

The suitability of some activities has not been properly considered. One activity that was arranged by a senior manager was not suitable for the child and no risk assessment was made. During the activity, there was an incident involving small children. On another occasion, a child was invited to have a meal and some activities at a senior member of staff's house. This breaches professional boundaries.

Essential firefighting equipment has not been replaced quickly after it has been used. Four of the six fire extinguishers around the home are either fully or partially discharged. Weekly checks by staff state that the fire extinguishers are in working order.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The day-to-day management arrangements fail to provide the required level of leadership and management oversight of the staff team. There has been a breakdown in the working relationship between the director, registered manager and the recently resigned responsible individual. Staff have been confused about who in the management team they should take direction from.

Management monitoring has not been effective. The registered manager and the director recognise the need for improvement. However, they were not aware of the seriousness of some of the shortfalls identified during this inspection. Incidents that require notification to external agencies have not been identified or reported.

Staff's failure to follow children's plans has resulted in incidents in which staff have been injured. For one child, this resulted in their placement breaking down at short notice. The decision to end this placement was made in isolation by one senior manager.

Managers have not ensured that newly recruited staff have received adequate induction training and supervisory support. These staff do not understand the provider's stated model of therapeutic care, which means that they cannot deliver it.

Changes to the personnel responsible for the recruitment of staff have been made without ensuring that these staff fully understand the requirements of safer recruitment. Staff have been allowed to start employment before references are reviewed, full work histories are obtained and qualifications are verified. Managers have made assumptions, without checking documents, of some staff's suitability to work with children.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the home opened in July 2022. Five staff have left and a further three staff have resigned. This contributes to a lack of stability for children and broken relationships, which makes it more difficult for children to form attachments. Staff say that morale is poor and that teamworking has declined.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(v))	18 November 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.	18 November 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; strive to gain each child’s respect and trust; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)) In particular, ensure that all staff: have training so that they can understand and encourage positive behaviours; understand and follow children’s behaviour plans; set consistent expectations of behaviour for children and are consistent in the use of rewards and consequences.	
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	18 November 2022

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; 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 are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	
*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— 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 staff work as a team where appropriate;	18 November 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; 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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff are able to meet children's needs and keep them safe to reduce the risk of abrupt endings to placements.	18 November 2022
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	18 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that— at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	18 November 2022

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2 (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(d)) In particular, check references to ensure prospective staff's suitability before employment begins. Ensure that a full written employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, is obtained.	18 November 2022
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(b))	18 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and	18 November 2022

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	18 November 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2680559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Path Residential Limited

Registered provider address: Cumberland House, 24 to 28 Baxter Street,
Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6HZ

Responsible individual: Dawn Quye-Joyce

Registered manager: Chelsea Hilder

Inspector

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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