

2687885

Registered provider: Pathway Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children with learning disabilities. It is part of a private organisation that has other registered homes for both children and adults. Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 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: 28 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: A monitoring inspection took place on 11 March 2025 to monitor progress against the compliance notice in relation to regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, and a restriction of accommodation notice issued after the assurance inspection on 16 January 2025. The compliance notice was deemed to have been met, and the restriction was lifted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
30/08/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy caring relationships with staff. Through these nurturing relationships, children are making consistent progress. Staff use a range of approaches to ensure that children's views, wishes and feelings are known. Joint working with speech and language therapists has led to children being able to use various communication tools, and they can show staff how they were feeling or what they want to do.

The home is laid out and resourced with the children in mind, meaning that their different needs, hobbies and pastimes are catered for. There are calm areas, a trampoline and soft areas for when children are upset or distressed.

Those children who are more independent are developing skills to be independent in the community, such as riding their bike to school and catching the bus to see their family in the next town. This approach to ensuring that individual needs are met means that children are developing new skills and are being as independent as they possibly can be.

Education has been an ongoing concern for one child. The staff have worked tirelessly, with the virtual school, social workers and others within the local authority to try and source a placement for the child. The child has been out of education for two years, but staff have not given up on trying to find the right education placement for them. They work with the tutor who comes to the home, as well as providing a wide range of activities for the child to engage in during school hours. This has led to increased confidence and independence for the child and a significant reduction in their behaviours of distress. Staff have advocated for a change in the child's education, health care plan too.

Close cooperation liaison and advocating for the children with education providers mean that one child is going on to do a catering course at college. Another child is coming to the point where education has not been sourced for their secondary education. Again, the staff working tirelessly to seek suitable education for them for the upcoming new academic year. In addition to formal education, children have a wide range of activities that they enjoy both at the home and in the local community.

Children's individuality and identity are supported by a diverse staff team. Staff work with parents to ensure that children's cultural identity is being followed as it would be at home. They ensure that children get to spend time with their families to maintain positive relationships with them.

Children's health and well-being are taken incredibly seriously, and there is strong joint working with partner agencies to seek the right medical support and interventions for children. The staff have actively challenged slow progress in seeking the right treatment for one child.

Staff are trained in the safe handling and administration of medication. The dedicated medical room contains all the information and flowcharts on each child's medical needs and the protocols to follow if staff are concerned about a child's welfare. However, a large bottle of liquid paracetamol was not locked away in the medication cupboard. This is a risk to children, as they come into the medication room to have their daily medications.

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

Children are happy and confident at the home and clearly see it as their own. They have positive relationships with the staff who look after them. Children welcome visitors to the home curiously but warmly, offering high fives.

Staff have an excellent understanding of children's risks and how children may be at risk both at the home and in the community. Staff are confident in the processes to follow if they are concerned about a child's welfare, including how to escalate their concerns beyond the organisation to the local authority.

Staff recognise that children's behaviours of distress are a form of communication, and they work with the children when they are upset or anxious. As a result, incidents have significantly reduced, including those of aggression towards others and self-injury. The use of physical intervention is rare and only when all other approaches have been exhausted.

Children are given the opportunity to take age-appropriate risks in line with their understanding and abilities. A child who is currently having more freedom said how happy they were being able to do things by themselves out in the community. They were confident in explaining what they would do if something went wrong and were observed calling the staff when they were struggling to get their bus pass to work when travelling to a youth club independently. When the child returned, staff were professionally curious to talk to them about their safety and what they had done while they were out.

The home is physically safe and mostly well maintained. There are areas that require some decoration and maintenance to be completed to a higher standard. Children know what to do if the fire alarm sounds. Staff use a video in one-to-one sessions to help the children understand how they are to leave the home when the alarm sounds. This has helped the children to become accepting of the alarm and know that the situation will end. They now leave the house calmly when the alarm sounds.

Overall, safer recruitment practices are followed to ensure that children are not cared for by unsuitable people. However, managers had not used their own monitoring tools effectively to ensure that a member of staff who had lived in another country had the appropriate checks prior to working at the home. They responded swiftly once this was noted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's manager has recently registered with Ofsted and is taking their responsibility seriously. The recent addition of a responsible individual with years of experience has helped support the management team to develop child-focused strategies and approaches. The appointment of a new deputy manager since the last full inspection has also strengthened the child-centred practice at the home, and staff say they feel more trusted and responsible for looking after the children. Staff commented that they now have the confidence to be able to care for the children in the way that they know they can.

Leaders and managers lead by example to ensure that children receive the care that they deserve and should have. Regular reviews and oversight of children's progress mean that all are aware of the children's goals and targets and how to work consistently to ensure these are met.

Staff talk positively about the wide range of training available to them, including that specific to different children's needs and conditions. Staff have regular supervision, and team meetings are used to share good practice and help further develop staff's skills in working and supporting the children.

Managers in the home work closely with partner agencies to ensure that children have the services that they require. They actively advocate where a child is not having the care that they need, including supporting parents with raising their concerns to agencies too.

The management team uses the monitoring and oversight by the independent visitor and actively challenges the quality of these reports to ensure that they meet the needs of the service and help them to become stronger. The manager also uses a wide range of review systems at the home to aid their own monitoring of the quality of care provided to ensure that children have the best opportunities.

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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a))	26 September 2025
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; 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)(d)) In particular, ensure that suitability checks for those who have lived and worked in other countries are carried out as part of the safer recruitment process.	26 September 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that maintenance is carried out promptly to a suitable standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2687885

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Quadrant House, Floor 6, Thomas More Square,
London E1W 1YW

Responsible individual: Jacqueline Hickman

Registered manager: Matthew Smith

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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