

SC391594

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who may have a learning disability. Placements for children or young people can be short-, medium- or long-term.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced and has managed the home since 2009. The home provides a holistic, safe, stimulating and supportive family environment where children cared for can live, learn and develop.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 October 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 2 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/05/2018	Full	Good
04/07/2017	Full	Outstanding
13/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/08/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
This is with reference to including in the location risk assessment data and/or intelligence on county line activity, gang culture and all forms of exploitation.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptionally high-quality care based on their individual needs. The environment is homely and nurturing and radiates warmth. The children are flourishing due to the highly motivated, enthusiastic and diverse staff team.

Despite the children's complex learning needs, they are making sustained and measurable progress. The competence and knowledge of the staff team ensure that care is tailored to the children's individual needs and abilities. A social worker said of one staff member: 'I have not come across a person who is so dedicated to her work and care of [Name of child]. He is a different little boy, and his parents will be proud of his progress.'

Much importance is placed on capturing the child's voice; consultation and participation are both innovative and creative. The use of picture exchange communication systems (PECS) symbols, Makaton and simple written and pictorial questionnaires ensures that the children's wishes, and feelings are given utmost importance. This is clearly evident in the range of activities the children have engaged in, such as day trips to the zoo, visits to the fire and rescue service, trips to the seaside and regular visits to the library, the park and indoor play centres.

All the children and staff take part in activities together in the home and in the community. The importance of feeling included and involved in 'our community' and 'our family' is very much embraced. Staff and the children participated in a local sponsored walk and attended an Eid festival. Meeting the children's cultural needs combined with promoting positive role models involved the Lord Mayor visiting the home. There was much fun and joviality. The children feel important and are cared for by individuals who want the best for them.

Education is prioritised and tailored to the children's learning needs. All achievements are

celebrated whether they be in their behaviour or in their learning. There is close and effective communication with schools through daily diaries, emails and network meetings. Staff readily know how the children have been that day and can have 'topics of conversation' with the children when they return home.

The manager is very proactive and will challenge the local authority and the virtual school service in making sure that there is minimal delay in sourcing specialist education for children who have recently been admitted to the home, this has been effective. A social worker said: 'Staff go that extra mile. They have gone into school to settle [Name of child] and learned some theraplay methods to help [Name of child] with personal boundaries.'

The admission and discharge of children are done with sensitivity and care. Detailed planning ensures that the child is at the centre of the manager's thinking. Matching considerations are well thought out. The children are involved in welcoming new admissions. They make welcome cards, and staff have made a video capturing the spirit and ethos of the home. Much effort is made in keeping in touch with past residents, and they continue to be supported through key times in their lives.

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

The risks for each child are well known and well managed. This includes any risks associated with the children's complex health needs, such as those relating to epilepsy or an autistic spectrum disorder. Staff have undergone specialist training in epilepsy recovery. The intuitive thinking and individualised approach of the staff, from bedtime routines to administering medication, have resulted in a marked reduction in seizures.

Risk assessments are clear and well documented and understood by all staff. Staff carry out key-work sessions and group activities, for example on stranger danger and fire safety, that teach the children how to keep safe. Individual independence plans help the children to take age-appropriate risks in relation to their learning needs, such as how to use kitchen implements safely or to cross the road and what to do if they get lost.

Professional practice results in continuous and sustained improvement. There are clear and consistent expectations for behaviour and good routines in place that the children respond well to. Most importantly, children feel and know that they are safe. This can be seen in their demeanour and presentation.

The emotional well-being and mental health of all the children are clearly understood by the manager and staff. Specialised services are identified and referred to, and highly effective multi-agency working is in place. Small steps, such as going to the dentist, using the toilet and eating healthily, have made such a difference. The impact of positive change in the children's lives is implicit in their behaviour, and their quality of life is much improved.

Children are protected if they make any allegations or complaints against staff. These are routinely followed up using safeguarding procedures and investigated within a multi-

agency framework. Children receive feedback following all allegations and are reassured that any allegation is taken seriously.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is inspirational and highly ambitious; she leads a highly skilled and motivated staff team and wants the very best for the children in her care. The manager is very hands on in her approach. She regularly engages with the children, writes letters to them and always responds to any requests or issues they have. As one child pointed out, 'She is the boss!'

The manager holds such a wealth of knowledge about the children, both past and present, and can talk about their backgrounds, needs and progress from their starting points. This is disseminated throughout the staff team and is such a special quality that clearly evidences the team members' commitment and dedication to the children.

The ethos of the home is very much based on family values. The children are included and consulted in every aspect of their lives and decisions about their home. Day-to-day chores and activities clearly replicate a family home: busy, nurturing and inclusive. Retention of staff is good, allowing the children to have consistency of care and the opportunity to form attachments.

The manager creates a culture of learning and has high but realistic expectations of her staff team, based on a sound knowledge of their individual strengths and areas of development. Each member of staff has key areas of responsibility. Additional training is provided relating to the needs of the children, such as the use of Makaton and epilepsy recovery.

Team meetings provide opportunities for innovative practice sessions on different topics, such as the role of the designated officer, the virtual school service, care standards and signs of abuse in children. Exceptionally good-quality recording and monitoring systems are in place and are child focused. These systems underpin the high-quality care of the children. This is supported by the positive feedback from professionals and parents.

The home has a location risk assessment in place, but it would benefit from more data or intelligence on county lines, exploitation and gang culture.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for

the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC391594

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Merchants Place, River Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 1BX

Responsible individual: Rachel Gillott

Registered manager: Stephanie Skinner

Inspector

Cath Sikakana: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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