

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	13/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC391594
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pathway Care Solutions II Limited
Registered person address	14 Regent Street, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 5BQ

Responsible individual	Mr Peter Vallelly
Registered manager	Ms Stephanie Skinner
Inspector	Ms Parveen Hussain

Inspection date	13/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC391594

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people feel safe and happy at the home. They do not want to leave.
- Young people stabilise and make improvements in all aspects of their development.
- There is a reduction of risk to young people from missing and abusive behaviours.
- Young people benefit from a warm, nurturing and safe home environment. They have good relationships with staff and develop a sense of permanence and belonging.
- Staff are committed and focused on providing high quality care.
- Staff maintain positive relationships with parents and professionals and share information effectively in the interests of young people.
- The manager and staff advocate strongly and champion young people's needs.
- Staff have a good insight of the triggers relating to young people's behaviours. They effectively manage young people's behaviours and seek support from specialists to personalise strategies.

Full report

Information about this children's home

- This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/01/2015	Full	Good
28/01/2014	Interim	Good progress
20/06/2013	Full	Good

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

Statutory Requirements

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff – If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or relevant persons performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plan (Regulation 5(c)). (With specific reference to the local authority care plan and statement of special educational needs)	30/11/2015
13: The leadership and management standard (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to the qualifications of staff undertaking shifts, the registered person is required to: (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	30/11/2015

Recommendations

- The children's guide should help children to understand how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. (The Guide to the Quality Standard, paragraph 4.22, page 24)
- It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, paragraph 11.5, page 56).

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people love living at the home. They make secure, trusting relationships with the adults working at the home. The caring staff team invest one-to-one time in young people. They listen to their views and talk about their experiences in school and with their family and friends. This helps young people develop a sense of belonging. One young person said, 'I don't want to ever leave. I love it here.' Staff involve young people in planning for their future. They are encouraged to attend meetings and participate in decision-making. Staff advocate strongly on their behalf. One social worker says, 'Staff have the same attitude as parents. They attend all the education, social care and health meetings and the voice of the child really comes through.' Young people know how to complain although rarely have the need to. They enjoy good relationships and talk to staff about personal issues. Young people have access to advocates and meet with them on a regular basis. This helps them to maintain relationships with others away from the home enabling them more opportunities to consult and raise concerns. Education placements are suited to the individual needs of young people. Those attending mainstream schools benefit extensively from good attendance. Young people that have been out of education experience successful transitions from home learning to school. This sensitively managed approach gently eases them into a full-time education enabling them to make progress in line with their peers. Young people access a wide range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, providing them new experiences. Young people enjoy yoga, swimming and dance classes. They make new friendships and develop their talents and skills. They take pride in their achievements and have photographs and mementoes from concerts and festivals where famous artists such as Ed Sheeran and Tinie Tempah have performed. One young person took part in a sponsored walk and raised money for the 'Well Child' charity. Such activities help young people develop self-esteem, a sense of achievement and responsibility for others less fortunate. Effective arrangements are in place for managing young people's physical and emotional health needs. Liaison with local and specialist services ensures their timely availability in line with young people's progressing needs. Input from mental health professionals ensures young people learn to regulate their emotions and	

manage conflict positively. Support to staff helps them understand how neglectful experiences affect young people's behaviour. As a result, staff implement consistent boundaries helping young people to learn about consequences.

Young people develop the skills required for independent living. They learn how to cook meals and bake cakes. Young people manage their personal care and do their own laundry. Regardless of their individual ability, all young people make good progress over time. One young person, with prompts from staff is now able to wash and dress himself. His mother says how impressed she is. 'He would not eat most things before he came to this home. You should see him now; he eats a full Sunday dinner. He's gone from one extreme to another.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe and protected from harm, neglect and other bullying behaviours. Staff provide them with a safe, nurturing home environment where their individual needs are effectively met. One young person said, 'I didn't feel safe to explore who I want to be. I hid my true personality and lifestyle choice. I don't feel scared here and I can show who I really am.' There have been no missing instances since the last inspection. On occasions, some young people leave the home for short periods. Staff adopt effective practices and follow them, all the time encouraging their safe return. They seek assistance from the police and other professionals to minimise harm when needed. This gives young people a clear message that staff care about their safety and wellbeing. Staff understand the risk to young people from grooming and sexual exploitation. Monitored use of the internet and firm boundaries prevent inappropriate use of social media sites. Young people understand the dangers related to internet safety and take part in key work sessions. Further topics include road safety and stranger danger. As a result, young people develop a sense of safety and benefit from safe relationships with adults and young people. Detailed risk assessments identify strategies to manage the potential for harm. Clear assessments of young people enable staff to support them in taking age-appropriate risks. Where additional concerns are raised, staff prioritise the safety and welfare of young people. For example, following inappropriate use, a plan supporting a young person to work towards having a mobile phone was withdrawn.	

The promotion of restorative practices and positive sanctions coupled with good de-escalation strategies lead to a marked reduction in physical interventions. Where restraint is required, they aim to prevent injury and destruction and are in strict accordance with legislation. Staff have a good understanding of young people's triggers and help them adapt their behaviours and responses over time. This protects them from any unnecessary involvement from the criminal justice system.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure only adults deemed safe offer care to children and young people. Staff receive safeguarding and first aid training ensuring they take appropriate action to address incidents of harm or abuse. Further safety measures include the regular monitoring and testing of fire and electrical equipment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She has been in post since 2009 and offers consistency to staff and young people. The acting assistant manager deputises in her absence. The Registered Manager has good systems in place to monitor and seek feedback from stakeholders about the quality of care to young people. These, coupled with the independent person's monthly monitoring ensure robust procedures are in place to address shortfalls. The manager has an understanding of the home's strengths and areas for potential improvement. The continuous improvement plan drives change at timely intervals and includes new flooring, recently decorated hallway and cleaned patio area. The manager and staff understand the plans for young people and drive forward their achievements, goals and important milestones. They secure permanence through stability and effectively demonstrate the impact of individual progress on young people. This leads to a growing confidence from stakeholders about staff and positive outcomes for young people. A parent said, 'Staff put 110% into looking after my child. Children really fall on their feet if they get a placement here.' Such proactive relationships with parents and professionals enable staff to champion young people's needs. Comprehensive care plans developed by the home identify the actual and potential risks of harm to young people. Good attendance at reviews ensures care plans are updated in accordance to the changing needs of young people. Participation meetings essentially enables young people to influence decisions appropriately.	

Staff benefit from timely supervision, appraisal and team meetings. Regular monitoring of staff performance enables the manager to assist staff development. This results in a committed and motivated workforce and impacts positively on the care afforded to young people. A parent said, 'They really make an effort. They get upset when my child is upset and they don't put it on – it's genuine.'

Written records do not reflect the levels of consideration given to new referrals and admissions to the home. This leads to a lack of transparency in how staff propose to mitigate risks to young people from group living situations. Although staff can pre-empt the difficulties, there are no written records evidencing this.

Further deficits in records refer to local authority care plans and special educational needs statements. Appropriate challenge and escalation of concern is lacking. This leads to gaps in information about the complex needs of young people. However, given staff have a very good understanding of individual young people, this mitigates the impact of their shortfall on their quality of care.

Staffing numbers are sufficient. There is a mix of new and experienced staff. Unqualified workers represent half of the staff team. This has led to regular occasions whereby unqualified staff cover night shifts. This could potentially impact negatively on young people's quality of care. However, the risks are minimised because of the good relationships and knowledge staff have of young people.

The recently updated Statement of Purpose informs stakeholders about the homes ethos and objectives. However, the children's guide does not provide details on how young people can contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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