

SC417031

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. The home can provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2020. The manager was registered in March 2022.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

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: 21 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2022	Full	Good
10/01/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff promote and respect the children's individuality. Children have established trusting relationships with staff, which helps them to feel safe. Staff support the children to attend activities that they enjoy, which provide opportunities for children to improve their social skills. Additionally, staff recognise that children enjoy spending time with their own social networks. This helps children to build confidence and develop independence skills.

Family relationships are promoted, and staff help children to spend time with people who are important to them. Parents said that they feel involved in the decision-making for their children. This helps children to receive consistent responses from parents and staff. Children see that the relationships with their family members are valued by staff. This increases the likelihood of meaningful relationships continuing in the future.

Staff help the children to understand the importance of education. Staff remove any barriers that may prevent children from attending education, such as making sure that transport is available. When children are not in school or college, the registered manager promptly secures in-house education. This helps children to continue to learn before they return to an education provision.

Children are welcomed into the home and their needs are carefully considered. Children can visit the home before they move in, which allows them to explore their new surroundings and ask questions before moving in. Staff encourage children's families to be part of the transition process. This creates a cohesive relationship with family members and helps children to be part of the decisions that affect them.

The communal areas of the home are comfortable and inviting. Children proudly display their artwork on walls, which gives the children a sense of ownership of their home. However, some areas of the home, which include the children's bedrooms, need regular cleaning and maintenance to be a more nurturing environment. This means that children will continue these good habits in the future if the staff model keeping rooms clean.

Staff encourage the children to personalise their bedrooms and take ownership of their personal space. When staff complete a room search of a child's bedroom, this is only in response to genuine concerns for the child's welfare. However, recordings of these room searches do not show whether the child was consulted, present or informed of the search.

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

Children's risks are understood by staff. Risk assessments are updated when risks emerge, which helps staff to know how to respond to children's needs. Staff engage

children in conversations about the wider risks in society. This helps to educate children to make better decisions and improves the children's ability to keep themselves safe.

Children who go missing from the home receive a coordinated response from the staff to ensure their safe return. Staff search for the children to try and locate them quickly. Staff support the children when they return to the home, which helps to reinforce to children that their safety is important. Additionally, this increases the likelihood that children will talk to staff about their experiences while they were away from the home.

When staff need to physically hold children, this is only done on rare occasions and as a last resort to prevent injury. On these occasions, staff and the children involved benefit from talking about what has happened. However, staff do not always provide a full account of the incident, such as recording the length of a hold. This limits the manager's ability to look at whether the length of the hold was proportionate for the child.

Staff help the children to attend routine and specialist health appointments to promote their health and well-being. However, children are not always supported to understand about healthy relationships and sexual health.

Staff encourage the children to develop independence skills that they can use in the future. However, staff restrict the children from having access to cupboards containing some foods, such as snacks. This limits opportunities to educate children to make decisions about healthier food choices.

Staff do not always help children to understand the potential consequences of using discriminatory language, such as about people's race. This is a missed opportunity to help children to learn about different cultures and religions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager demonstrates commitment to the children and the home. She is visible to children and staff to provide help and support. The manager advocates on behalf of the children and is keen to make sure that the children have opportunities to learn and enjoy.

Professionals and the children's families hold the registered manager in high regard. As a result, strong working relationships within the children's networks are developed. Additionally, the registered manager has developed respectful relationships with neighbours, who compliment the home. This helps the children to feel valued in their local community. Children also learn to develop pro-social behaviours that will help them in adulthood.

The registered manager follows safer recruitment procedures, which mean that new members of staff are appropriately vetted. Leaders and managers thoroughly

investigate allegations made against staff. This action makes sure that the children are protected and cared for by staff who are safe.

The registered manager strives to provide a consistent staff team for the benefit of the children. Agency staff are used as a last resort. Furthermore, the registered manager has taken a creative approach when there are staff shortages. This includes the management team covering shifts, which provides predictable care for the children.

The registered manager has a thorough understanding of the day-to-day events of the home. Audit tools ensure that children's records are maintained and that staff are accountable for any recordings. Staff complete new and refresher training so that the staff have the skills and knowledge to be able to care for the children.

However, staff do not benefit from regular team meetings or regular practice-related supervisions. This means that staff practice is not reviewed and this limits opportunities to improve the quality of the help and support that children receive.

The senior leadership team are proactive in supporting the registered manager and the team. The development plan of the home includes a new database, which will enhance the clarity of recording and audits.

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 registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	2 October 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	2 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children can access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. This specifically relates to placing certain foods in locked cupboards. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that when room searches are conducted, there is a clear recording of the reason for the search, whether the child was present and whether the child's permission was sought. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home, including children's bedrooms, are clean and regularly maintained to provide a homely and nurturing environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that children and young people understand discrimination, such as about a person's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or

for any other reason. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.12)

- The registered person should ensure that staff help children to understand, and where necessary work to change, negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being, such as sexual relationships, sexual health and contraception. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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: SC417031

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

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

Responsible individual: Kian Tracey

Registered manager: Sandra Brown

Inspector

Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

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