

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC417031
Inspector	Ann-Marie Born
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pathways Care Group Limited
Registered person address	The Old Stables 1 Grove Hill Road HARROW Middlesex HA1 3AA
Responsible individual	Colin William Farebrother
Registered manager	David Andrew Grayson
Date of last inspection	17/03/2014

Inspection date	10/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Excellent care planning ensures that all of a young person's holistic and diverse needs are comprehensively identified and fully met. This includes identifying specific interventions, such as engaging the services of a psychologist. As a result young people make substantial progress in all aspects of their lives, in particular developing emotional resilience and educational achievement. A teacher said, 'He's made very good progress in reading and grammar. He has also been nominated for an award for improved behaviour. His attitude has completely changed, he is fantastic.'

A staff member said, 'You treat the bairns like you would your own and you want them as happy as yours are.' The exceptional relationships between staff and young people allow young people to thrive in an atmosphere of trust and security. As a result young people make outstanding progress in building self-esteem and feelings of self-worth allowing them to form trusting and sustainable relationships. A young person said, 'The staff are class. I feel listened to and respected and because of that I can talk about anything and I trust they won't let me down. They are the most outstanding staff I've met.'

Young people feel safe and parents and professionals corroborate they are safe in this home. This sense of belonging and security allows young people to build social and life skills while they grow and mature. A young person said, 'I love it here, it is

my home. I'm safe here because they understand me. '

The home is managed effectively. There is good oversight of young people's care and safety and the progress they make. The committed and proactive manager uses the information gathered through effective monitoring processes to inform development plans which fully benefit young people. There is one recommendation as a result of this inspection. That is to improve the quality of all young people's risk assessments.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2014	Interim	good progress
10/05/2013	Full	good
01/02/2013	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	Full	inadequate

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment that includes providing individual written risk assessments, which include a measure of the severity and likelihood of known risks. (NMS 4.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make significant progress in developing emotional resilience as a result of the consistent support they receive from staff. This effectively enables young people to build sustainable relationships with trusted staff members while maintaining positive connections with their family members and local community. A social worker said, 'he has made excellent progress' and a young person commented, 'when I first came here I didn't do anything or speak to anyone. But now, I like and trust staff and feel I can talk to anyone.'

Young people's psychological, emotional and physical health improve as they engage with both generic and specialist health provision. In addition, young people who had previously refused are now able to engage with psychological services as a result of the persistent support of staff and the in-house psychologist. This leads to marked improvements in young people's emotional health and well-being. A social worker commented, 'It is good they have the in-house psychologist. His behaviour has significantly improved, more settled. This is the most settled placement to date.'

Young people make exceptional progress in improved attendance at school and college empowering them to achieve academically. This effectively builds self-confidence and self-esteem, improving young people's future life chances and opportunities for both academic success and employment. A teacher said, '(Name) is making really good progress and has recently achieved a certificated qualification, this is a major achievement.'

Young people's improved feelings of self-worth, and confidence in their abilities to communicate, enable them to make a positive contribution to their home and community. For example, participating in the recruitment of new staff and becoming an active member of the school council.

Maintaining important familial relationships and positive community and cultural links is one of the strengths in this home. This effectively allows young people to understand their place within their family and community providing them with emotional support now, and in their future independent lives. A youth offending service worker said, 'Contact is going very well, it's important to (name) to see her family and the home fully support this. All the family have visited and they love it.'

Young people's specific developmental needs in preparation for transition to adulthood are well known. Individual planning addresses those needs empowering young people to learn necessary life and social skills. For example, using public transport and being able to communicate positively in shops or learning how to do their own laundry and keep their rooms tidy. As a result young people grow in confidence and well-being enabling them to take new opportunities and build positive

new friendships. A young person said, 'I've got friends now as well and I didn't think I would have friends like I have.'

Quality of care

outstanding

The nurturing and skilled staff team provide young people with a warm and caring environment in which to thrive. As a result young people feel secure and 'respected' enabling them to build positive, warm and constructive relationships with staff and each other. This also enables young people to support and learn from each other. One young person said of another, 'He'll be a cracking lad when he matures'.

The proactive and receptive staff team provide a range of methods for young people to share their wishes and feelings. These include young people's meetings, the 'Tell Us About It' suggestion book, key work sessions and relaxed discussion around the meal table. Young people learn positive negotiation and communication skills as a result. This enables young people to feel valued and heard.

A comprehensive and detailed complaints system is implemented and understood by staff and young people. However, the strong and nurturing bonds between staff and young people enables any potential discord to be addressed as it arises and there have not been any complaints.

Excellent care planning incorporates all aspects of a young person's holistic and cultural needs. For example, enabling young people to maintain positive relationships and attachments within their home community. The proactive staff team work diligently with young people to address all identified need, using key work sessions extremely well to empower young people to consistently contribute to their plans. In addition, monthly progress reports enable young people to identify their achievements and recognise realistic areas for development. As a result young people feel valued and appreciated enabling them to thrive. A psychologist commented, '(Name) has settled because they are able to show him they understand him.'

The warm and nurturing staff team provide young people with a healthy environment in which to grow and develop. They are good role models encouraging young people to eat healthily and engage in regular physical activity, promoting a healthier lifestyle. As a result of staff's persistence, young people are also engaging with specialist health professionals when they had previously refused to do so. This effectively improves young people's psychological health while enhancing their physical and emotional well-being. A psychologist said, 'From my point of view he has made an enormous amount of progress since he's settled in.'

As a result of the enthusiastic staff's positive encouragement, young people, including those new to the home, are achieving extremely well in school and college

and are aspirational for their futures. Young people engage fully in education and extra-curricular activities. This provides them with positive learning experiences and further opportunities to make positive peer group friendships. A youth offending service worker said, 'Staff are spot on with her education, no lapses. Staff were great and sorted education out straight away', and a young person stated, 'I'm doing brilliantly at college now because I feel better in myself. '

The motivated staff team provide young people with a range of inclusive, positive and fun activities within the community and home in which to participate. For example, day trips to fun parks, membership of a local open air museum, attending skate parks and a go-kart track. Young people learn and improve their social skills and sense of belonging as a result. Young people are enriched as they take pride in building positive relationships in the community, develop new skills and have fun.

Young people enjoy living in a spacious, warm and comfortable home that blends in with the local community. They take pride in their home and as a result confidently make suggestions to further enhance their surroundings. They 'love' being able to decorate their bedrooms to their own taste and choose soft furnishings for the home. Although the home is in a rural location there is easy access to community facilities, large towns and a large shopping centre. A young person said, 'I think the home is in a great location because (town name) is just down the road and the metro centre is that way and (town name) the other way, and I love the countryside and having the views.'

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are and feel safe in this home. Stringent safeguarding procedures are effectively followed ensuring that young people's individual safety is paramount. Young people confirm that they feel safe in the home with one young person saying, 'I love it that there is waking night staff because it makes me feel safe and secure and that nobody could get in and hurt me.'

Nevertheless, young people's risk assessments are not adequately robust to make it clear how severe or likely a known risk is. This information is important to fully safeguard young people; particularly when they have participated in past risk taking behaviours. The impact on young people, at the time of inspection, is minimal as there is local authority information available to inform staff of the young person's previous behaviours and risks. However, as the placement progresses, risks may change and it is important all staff have access to clear risk areas and agreed risk reduction measures.

Individual missing person risk assessments are linked with young people's behaviour management plans. The dedicated staff team are aware of risk factors which may cause young people to absent themselves from the home and proactively address them. As a result young people do not go missing from this home, which is a marked

improvement on previous placements.

Young people learn positive behaviours as a result of the effective reward programme implemented by the home. For the majority of the time young people behave appropriately and physical interventions are not necessary. On the occasions when restraint has had to be used to prevent injury and protect young people, staff work together to identify triggers and prevent further episodes. As a result young people learn the consequences of their actions. A parent said, 'He has progressed, his behaviour is much better and he is learning to control himself. He's only had two restraints since he moved; he used to get restrained every week in other places.'

Robust vetting and recruitment procedures are effectively implemented. Staff members are carefully selected to work well with each other and work within the home's ethos. Consequently young people are not cared for by people who may pose a risk to them and who can meet their needs. A social worker said, 'The transition to the home was very smooth and made very much easier by staff at the home. The homely environment helps children settle. I'm very happy with the home. '

Young people are safeguarded by the appropriate implementation of effective health and safety procedures. Regular fire evacuation drills, including at night time, ensure that young people and staff would know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

good

The suitably qualified, well experienced manager has held Registered Manager status of this home since November 2012. Since that time the home has improved from inadequate to its current good with outstanding features status, under his guidance. Staff speak very positively about the impact his management skills have had on staff morale and outcomes for young people. A staff member said, 'Children are safe, they are making real progress and we are giving them a home to grow up in.'

The home is located in a small cul-de-sac and on occasion there has been some conflict with neighbours. As a result of the improved behaviours of young people and proactive approach by the manager the situation is now resolved. A neighbour sent a complimentary letter of thanks to the manager stating that, 'Just a short note to say how much I value the great improvements you have made to the children's home over the past two years. Both myself and my neighbours have been delighted by the conduct of the children in your care and your thoughtfulness and consideration are much appreciated.'

There were no requirements or recommendations imposed at the last inspection. The manager and staff have demonstrated their capacity for continued improvement by the effective implementation of the positive reward scheme and monthly progress reports. These ensure young people feel secure, valued and for the most part behave appropriately.

Young people's files hold individual monthly achievement sections which effectively demonstrate the impact the home has on their outcomes. For example, young people's achievements in November 2014 included, '91.67% attendance at school', 'taking pride in appearance and personal hygiene', 'contact with mum and family improving significantly' and 'has engaged in therapeutic intervention'. This information is shared with young people whose self-confidence and self-esteem improve as they recognise the progress they are making.

Young people, their parents and professionals receive comprehensive information about the care to be provided by the home in the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. These bright, colourful and detailed documents ensure that all concerned understand the home's ethos and safeguarding procedures leading to young people being appropriately placed. This enhances young people's opportunities for achievement.

Very good internal and external monitoring processes fully comply with regulation. The views of young people, their parents and other interested parties are routinely captured and used to continually enhance young people's care. Information gathered as part of the monitoring processes is used to inform the home's development plan. This details how areas of weakness are to be improved and the home's strengths built upon. For example, arranging specialist staff training to address young people's identified vulnerabilities. This ensures young people's needs are met.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a well-trained and supported staff team. Staff members report that supervision sessions meet their developmental and practice requirements. This enables them to respond extremely well to young people's identified needs and vulnerabilities. Young people thrive within this productive, stimulating and nurturing environment. A youth offending service worker said, 'The home and staff have definitely impacted on (name). She sees this as her home; all her family can see a big difference and change. '

The proactive manager and staff team work in close partnership with placing authorities to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Review meetings are well planned for and young people fully supported to actively participate. Young people understand what the plans are for their future care and feel listened to and valued as a result. Young people's records provide them with an up-to-date understanding of their lives and plans for the future. They are stored securely.

Detailed recordings of significant events are appropriately notified to relevant agencies. This good practice, coupled with regular communication between the home and other professionals, provides young people with further safeguards as it offers a multi-agency approach to their care. A social worker said, 'Communication and updates from staff are good, we get monthly written reports. '

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.