

SC417031

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider to care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited the setting on 26 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
26/06/2018	Full	Good
14/06/2017	Full	Good
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There are two children living in the home. They are cared for by a consistent team of staff who are committed to providing the children with comfort and support. However, a lack of detailed care plans, and strategies to guide the staff in the most effective ways of meeting the wider needs of children, is affecting the children's progress.

Children's care is inconsistent. Not all of the staff are aware of the strategies that are in place. This means that the children have different experiences of living in this home. Two children have recently left the home with different experiences. For one child, the move was positive; for another, the local authority made the decision that the child would not return. The children who remain in the home feel more relaxed and settled now some of the children have moved on.

Staff support the children to attend education. Staff make efforts to help the children to attend, providing transport and support, and most of the time this is successful. However, the children's attendance is varied. Staff are aware of the reasons for this but where attendance is difficult for the children, the staff have not been effective at engaging them in alternative education.

Staff support children to stay healthy and attend appointments where necessary. Health plans are in place, and staff manage the monitoring and administration of medication well. Where external professionals require health needs to be monitored, this is in place. However, the records do not provide sufficient detail to evaluate the effectiveness of the work completed.

Children enjoy a range of activities outside of the home. Trips such as outings to Blackpool, Glasgow and nearby community farms, help children to develop confidence, enjoy new experiences and have fun. This helps the children to learn social skills and how to engage with the world around them, which is important as they grow into their adulthood.

Children do spend time with friends in the community to varying degrees. However, when in the home children spend a lot of time away from staff in their bedrooms, sometimes dealing with emotional crisis on their own. Staff support children well when incidents are known and are caring and nurturing in their approach. However, there is a lack of a proactive approach to dealing with situations and children's feelings to prevent further incidents occurring. This links to the lack of care planning and agreed strategies to manage behaviour.

Staff do not use sanctions as a response to behaviour, but incentives are in place, and children are rewarded regularly. This helps children to learn positive ways of managing their own behaviour.

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

Staff help the children to become increasingly safe. Staff access a wide range of external resources to help the children address their emotional needs which result from their early life experiences. Staff talk through the incidents that occur, with the children, and effective risk management plans are in place to address the children's known risks.

Staff regard the safety of the children as paramount. Professionals and families speak positively about the safety of the children. Progress from the children's starting points is positive; some children have now reduced their missing-from-home incidents, and some are now better equipped to manage their emotions safely. However, this approach is reactive and deals with the immediate incidents rather than the underlying cause of children's emotional difficulties.

Episodes of the children going missing-from-home are reducing. Staff manage these episodes well and keep family and professionals informed throughout. Staff welcome children back when they return and offer comfort to children to try and minimise future episodes. The children have responded well to this approach.

Individual key-work sessions are held with the children in response to incidents or where risks are known. At these sessions, the staff share information to help the children to reflect on and potentially change their behaviour to minimise future risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The management of the home has been affected by a range of issues in recent months, not least a period where COVID-19 affected the staff group significantly.

Managers continue to be ambitious for the children and encourage the staff to help children have high expectations of themselves.

Staff meetings and individual staff supervision sessions do take place in line with the organisation's policy. However, the contents of the records are brief and do not include discussions about the needs and progress of the children. In addition, supervision is not reflective. Therefore, the staff are not provided with an opportunity to address any concerns that they may have in a constructive forum. The managers operate an open-door policy which supports the staff but does not lead to changes in practice across the team. Staff feel listened to and supported. A member of staff stated, 'The manager is always there for us if we need to talk about anything.'

There is a locality risk assessment in place that covers the known risks in the area. However, there are potential risks from recent incidents in the community that are not included. This leaves the children at potential risk of harm.

Training for the staff takes place regularly. The organisation has introduced new certified training to help the staff understand the trauma behind the behaviours of the children. However, not all the staff have had this training. In addition, the staff have not completed any training to meet the specific needs of the children, or their training is significantly out of date. This leads to a lack of opportunity to address some of the individual needs of the children and contributes to inconsistencies in staff practice.

Recruitment practice generally follows safer recruitment guidance. However, when the staff return back to the organisation after periods away, full and complete checks are not undertaken. This means that the managers are not exploring all the avenues of information relevant to the employment of staff. As such, the managers cannot be assured that all the staff are vetted as required.

The manager does have monitoring systems in place. However, these did not identify the shortfalls in practice found at this inspection. Therefore, the manager's systems are not fully effective.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(iv))	30 November 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;	30 November 2021

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(ix))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))	30 November 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development;	30 September 2021

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c)) This specifically relates to the daily recordings.	30 October 2021
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1))	30 September 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor SL4 1EG

Responsible individual: Olubunmi Fabusuyi

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Susan Atkinson-Millmoor, Regulatory Inspection Manager
Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector

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