

SC417031

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Assurance 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. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home. The inspector spoke to three children and observed all four children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2025.

This assurance inspection took place in response to the previous requires improvement judgement and a whistle-blowing complaint received by Ofsted.

Inspection date: 16 September 2025

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Since the last inspection, three children have remained living at this home. One child has been supported to move in. The manager completed an assessment to consider the compatibility of children living together. The manager ensured that the child was able to visit and learn about their home before moving in. The child said this helped them to feel confident about the move.

Children have individual risk assessments that give staff actions on what to do to help children to be safe. Additionally, planned key-work sessions focus on children's areas of risk or vulnerability and are responsive to their needs.

The manager leads by example and challenges poor staff practice. When the manager identifies that staff's attitude or behaviour does not align with the home's policies, she follows safeguarding procedures effectively. This helps to ensure that staff who are caring for children are safe.

Children's relationships with staff are generally positive. Children can identify staff that they trust and feel able to confide in. Most children say they feel safe and listened to. However, one child said that they do not always feel listened to or cared for by staff. With the support of a clinical team, staff take the time to understand the children's views, complex history and how this can impact on how children develop relationships. Other children speak positively about staff and hold the manager in high regard. One child wrote, 'I waited for my full life for my family to be proud of me; my carers did in one week.'

Staff lock a cupboard so the children cannot access some foods, such as snacks. Most of the children are happy with this arrangement and feel it is beneficial. However, these restrictive measures limit opportunities for staff to educate children to make informed decisions about healthier food choices. Some foods, for example juice, are labelled in the fridge with a child's name, which means other children cannot use it. This does not help to create a homely environment or help children to live cohesively together. Furthermore, the manager has not developed a plan to review the effectiveness or necessity of these arrangements.

There are aspects of the home environment that have improved, for example children's photos on the walls and toys in communal areas of the home that help children identify this as their home. However, some areas of the home are unkempt and unclear. For example, children's clothing is untidy in their wardrobes, one child's room was not adequately cleaned following maintenance work and children's rooms have strong and unpleasant smells. This does not provide a nurturing environment or help children to understand how to care for their personal space. Additionally,

trees in the garden are overgrown, which makes it more difficult to access the area where the home's pets are kept.

The manager and staff work with education professionals when children are not attending a provision. One child is now able to attend a vocational course that they are interested in as a future career. However, one child continues to have a disorganised routine, sleeping during the day and staying awake during the night. The strategies that staff use are not effective. However, the child is now receiving therapeutic input to help their overall well-being.

Incidents between children in the home are responded to promptly, although relationships between two children are fractious. One child said that they do not always feel safe in the home following an incident where a child attempted to set fire to another child's clothes. The manager acknowledges the difficulties in the relationship between the children and made practical changes, such as children changing bedrooms. Discussions take place individually with children after incidents. However, the management team does not have a plan to help children live together and develop tolerance of each other.

The manager has improved the quality of monitoring and oversight of the home. This includes improved care plans to track children's progress and monthly summary letters to children. In the main, the systems are effective. However, the manager's ability to monitor the home is limited as some aspects of the electronic database are limited to a short date range before information is archived. Although the manager is visible in the home day to day, this limits her ability to identify patterns and look at information collectively.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/07/2023	Full	Good
21/06/2022	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))	14 November 2025
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; and positive responses to other children and adults. 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; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;	14 November 2025

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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— understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; 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; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	14 November 2025

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC417031

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: Pathways Care Group, Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor SL4 1EG

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Collette Devlin-Smith

Inspector

Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

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