

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 operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2010. There has been no registered manager in post since January 2026.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children were living at the home and 2 were spoken with.

Inspection date: 19 February 2026

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 inspectors evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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

This assurance inspection was carried out in response to concerns received by Ofsted. At the inspection, we identified serious and widespread concerns about the care and protection of children and the leadership and management of this home.

There are significant concerns regarding the safety and welfare of children living in the home. Children are not being kept safe under the supervision of staff. Leaders, managers and staff have failed to notify family members of safeguarding incidents involving their children. Despite an expectation of weekly updates, family members have learned of these concerns through other professionals. In addition, poor communication with professionals involved in the children's welfare, has prevented these professionals from taking timely action to safeguard children.

Significant shortfalls in staff practice have been identified including staff members sleeping when on shift, leaving times when children have been left unsupervised, leading to a significant safeguarding incident. This behaviour has occurred on more than one occasion because of staff's failure to fulfil their roles effectively and supervise children appropriately. Staff do not follow children's plans, or the direction of managers. This has contributed to children experiencing harm.

Despite known risks of self-harming behaviours for one child, staff failed to safely store medication. As a result, the child took the medication and required hospital treatment. Although staff responded appropriately once they became aware of the incident, the lack of effective safeguarding practice directly contributed to the child experiencing harm and a hospital; admission that could have been avoided.

Leaders and managers have not responded appropriately to concerns around staff practice. Staff have continued to work in the home despite known safety concerns. When staff have raised issues with senior leaders, these concerns have at times been minimised or dismissed, preventing appropriate action from being taken. This has left staff feeling unsupported and has reduced their confidence in the provider's ability to maintain a safe and well-managed service.

There has been a high turnover in staff which has resulted in an over-reliance on agency staff, particularly at night. Children have shared concerns about unfamiliar staff working in the home and how this has caused them distress. At the time of this assurance inspection, several core staff members were due to leave imminently, thereby increasing further reliance on the use of agency workers.

There are significant failings in the oversight and monitoring of the home, that have contributed to the poor practice and wider instabilities across the staff team. Low staff moral and inconsistent practice-related supervision sessions across the team, have left practice shortfalls unchallenged or unaddressed. As a result, unsafe practice has continued and children have not received the safe care required.

While some areas of the home are appropriately furnished and maintained, other areas are not. One communal space used by a child was found to be untidy and unclean. The staff office was poorly organised, with children's records not stored securely. Another room currently used as a staff office contained dismantled furniture and belongings from a previous child. This space was accessible to children and presented safety risks.

When children first move to the home they settle well. Children develop relationships with staff and have a variety of enjoyable experiences through activities at home and in the community. Some children made progress early on such as risks reducing and school engagement.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(d))	16 April 2026

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	16 April 2026
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—	16 April 2026

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; 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	16 April 2026

enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.
(Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix)(c)(i)(ii))

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

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: Gary Laville

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

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