

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	19/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC417031
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Pathways Care Group Limited
Registered provider address	238a Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2PS

Responsible individual	Colin Farebrother
Registered manager	David Grayson
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	19/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC417031

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from a warm, nurturing environment provided by a caring and committed staff team.
- Activities and achievements are well supported and documented to give young people positive memories of their time in the home.
- Education is well promoted and supported.
- Contact with family and friends is recognised as important and is well supported, enabling young people to rebuild family relationships and gain resilient friendships for support in the future.
- Effective partnership working is seen as essential. The manager and staff ensures that this works in the best interests of young people.
- Staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people to ensure that their wishes and feelings are heard and listened to.
- Independent psychological consultation is available, focusing on the individual needs of young people, which staff incorporate into care practice.
- Young people achieve stability and make good progress from their starting points.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child — (i) is instigated; or (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— (a) must include details of— (i) the matter; (ii) the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and (iii) any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; (b) must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40(4) & (5))	22/07/2016
14. In order to meet the requirements of the care planning standard, with particular reference to planning for new admissions to the home, the registered person must ensure that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's	12/08/2016

home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (b) that arrangements are in place to— (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; (c) that each child's relevant plans are followed.	
13. In order to meet the requirements of the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to enabling and leading practice rather than delivering practice directly, the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) 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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	26/08/2016
12. In order to meet the requirements of the protection of children standard, with particular reference to risk assessments to inform practice, the registered person must ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if	22/07/2016

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) 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;	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— (f) imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation; (Regulation 19(2)(f))	22/07/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27).
- Children's home staff should take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child's needs and

developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. Staff should discuss the decision with the child's placing authority where appropriate. If a child makes a choice that would place them or another person at significant risk of harm, staff should assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7).

- As set out in Regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1).
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home may only provide care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by an independent provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
3/11/2015	Full	Good
3/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/12/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make good progress from their starting points and benefit from positive, secure relationships with the adults working at the home. Staff know young people well and invest time with them daily. This builds trust between the adults and young people enabling them to use key-working sessions effectively to discuss issues of concern. Young people are able to develop an appropriate sense of belonging as well as developing and maintaining positive relationships with their family. A young person said, 'The staff are good here.' Another young person commented, 'If I'm out, they (staff) are always phoning to see if I'm okay.' Young people have access to an understandable complaints procedure. Their complaints are treated seriously and fully investigated. They receive a prompt response and an outcome from the issues that they raise. Where appropriate, the manager addresses any practice issues that arise. The impact is that young people's self-esteem improves as a result of being listening to. Young people are encouraged to see the importance of educational attendance and achievement. Staff support through transporting, attending meetings and advocating on behalf of young people. The result is that even though some young people have experienced difficulties within their educational placements they continue to attend and achieve. This increases their future life chances with regard to college and work. Young people engage in a variety of recreational activities outside of the home including skate boarding, drama school and youth clubs. Young people are also engaged in the national citizenship awards. This improves their health and well-being both physically and emotionally. Staff ensure that young people are able to access services that enable them to successfully manage their own health needs. This, along with a full programme of self-care skills and budgeting, help to prepare young people to live independently as adults. A young person said, 'I am taking care of myself, I don't drink alcohol anymore and I'm eating well. I have learned to cook, clean and do laundry while here.' The home benefits from specialist help from a psychologist. He helps staff to address the needs of young people through attending staff meetings every two months. At the meetings, all staff can raise issues and receive advice and guidance that enables practice to be effective. The psychologist said 'I find they (the staff) are very good at communicating and working in partnership with me. They have turned (name) around with some brilliant work.'	

Contact with family and friends is supported and encouraged by the staff team. Family and friends are welcomed into the home as well as young people being transported to and from contact in their home area. The outcome is that young people are able to repair family relationships, allowing them to return home or build up support networks for their lives as an adult. A young person said, 'I get on better with my mum now and know my grandad just has my best interests at heart.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Overall, young people live in a safe environment. However, the actions that staff take to support and protect young people require improvement. Usually there is a strong, proactive response from staff that reduces the risk of harm to young people. However, this was found lacking in a recent admission to the home. Information in relation to the indicators of exploitation was available in reports but not acted upon in the first few weeks of the placement. This led to a higher level of vulnerability and risk for the young person. The manager, who had been on leave, addressed this during the inspection. Staff work closely with the police and other professionals to return young people to the home who go missing. Young people are helped to explore the reasons for their absence and the risks that this behaviour poses, increasing their safety and well-being. A member of the local police ERASE team who deals with missing young people said, 'They communicate well with me and keep me updated with everything.' Young people who go missing are offered an opportunity to speak to an independent person following their return home. This enables staff and young people to gain an understanding about the reasons leading to missing behaviour and prevent future episodes. Risk assessments are used and reviewed regularly to enable appropriate risk taking by young people. However, these are based on the subjective evaluations of the manager rather than a matrix approach. The use of such an approach would enable a clear range of risks and risk-taking behaviour to be evaluated and produced, which will enable day-to-day practice. In addition, general risk assessments in relation to the home were carried out in 2010. The manager signs to say that he has reviewed them yearly, but such assessments are not, 'live' and therefore impinge the safety of young people and staff. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. There are clear expectations and boundaries in place. Sanctions are rarely used as the team prefers a restorative approach. However, reparation is used and recorded in financial records but not in the sanction book or the young person's file. This is required as such records contribute to the life picture for a young person but also enable the regulator to evaluate the appropriateness of sanctions used.	

Physical interventions are rarely used and episodes have reduced since the last inspection. Staff use de-escalation techniques and respond quickly to rises in emotional states or disruptive behaviour. This helps young people to begin to self-manage their behaviours and emotions.

Pre-admission assessments allow appropriate decision making when assessing the suitability of a young person before admitting them to the home. However, impact assessments do not cross reference behaviours that would enable staff to disrupt any opportunity for inappropriate friendships or behaviours to develop. Care plans and behaviour management plans are in place and reviewed. However, the regularity of the reviews leads to practice based on historic events rather than being an evaluation of the current behaviours. The impact is that young people's behaviour show intermittent spells of returning to known behaviours rather than sustaining improvement over long periods of time.

The home is well maintained, but some safety elements such as fire doors were in need of repair. In addition, there were trip hazards in the patio area and inside the home in doorways between rooms. There are controls in place on the home's internet which will keep young people safe from online abuse. However, young people have access to their own internet via mobile phones and tablets. There are no protocols in place to address this and no information in the young people's guide in relation to this issue. This increases the risks from unsafe adults in the wider community.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with the local police to keep young people safe. The local police community support officer visits the home weekly for an update and to offer any assistance. She stated that she, 'feels the home has improved under (name)'s management'. This working relationship demonstrates to young people that staff make all efforts to keep them safe and well.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The manager is a suitably qualified and experienced individual who has been in post since November 2012. However, the effectiveness of his practice has reduced. The manager is knowledgeable and committed, but the strong leadership seen in previous inspections has shifted from modelling proactive approaches to the staff team, to him undertaking tasks directly and this requires improvement. The shift in the emphasis of his practice has meant that some of the leadership and management tasks of his role have drifted. This was evident by the differing approach to the admission that took place during his leave, the records and in staff responses during the inspection. When asked for files and records the responses were to direct inspectors to the manager rather than respond directly. Members of staff spoken to stated that they are well supported and have regular	

supervision. However, supervision records evidence very little action for staff. The impact is that young people are aware of the hierarchy in place but this detracts from receiving quick responses at times and can lead to frustration.

Recruitment procedures are robust and followed. However, when looking at gaps in employment, there is an evaluation of the information but no evidence of how the conclusion was reached. This makes independent investigation of any issues difficult. The staff team is sufficient in number, qualifications and experience. There is a training matrix in place that ensures that training is kept up to date. However, the experiences of the young person recently admitted indicate that the team would benefit from a more in-depth course on child sexual exploitation. This would increase staff understanding of the subject and enable them to keep young people safe.

Recording in the numerous records and young people's files is at times brief and does not evidence the work undertaken by staff to keep young people safe. The number of records does not help with the recording task and needs to be addressed. This would ensure that recording of the events in the young people's lives is complete. The result will be increased proactive practice to keep young people safe.

Significant events affecting the welfare and safety of young people are not always notified to Ofsted in accordance with legislation. When there is a clear category, events are notified. However, when there is a judgement required as to the level of seriousness there are shortfalls in reporting. The impact is that the regulator has limited opportunities to establish what action has been taken to address the concerns and protect the welfare of young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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