

SC462149

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for two children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a private organisation.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/11/2018	Full	Good
01/12/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/06/2017	Full	Good
09/12/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(2)(a)(b))	04/02/2020
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;	04/02/2020

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))	
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(f))	04/02/2020
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	04/02/2020

Recommendations

- The relevant plan may include a strategy for a particular type of care, treatment or intervention (for example therapy relating to neglect or abuse). The care staff will need to understand the purpose of any such care and the way in which the past experiences of abuse or neglect may manifest itself in the day to day life of the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.15)
- In a restraint situation, staff should use their professional judgement, supported

by their knowledge of each child's risk assessment, an understanding of the needs of the child (as set out in their relevant plans) and an understanding of the risks the child faces. Professional judgements may need to be taken quickly, and staff training and supervision of practice should support this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint (regulation 35(3)(c)). Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this (regulation 7(2)(b)(iii)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- All children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The overall progress that children make is good. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and histories. They have developed positive relationships with the children. A child said: 'I have a lot of people I can talk to and they do support me. I have staff that understand me.'

Children have a say in the day-to-day arrangements of the home. They have regular opportunities to share their views and contribute to menu planning, the decor of the home and activity planning. The home is freshly decorated and is homely.

Children are involved in regular fun activities. Children enjoy the range of opportunities that are available to them. For example, over the summer the children enjoyed staying in a log cabin and had a theme park holiday. A child said, 'I give the home 10 out of 10.'

Children are supported extremely well to do well in school. Education objectives are set out clearly in care plans. Staff understand children's strengths and weaknesses. Children are either on target or achieving beyond expectations.

Children are healthy. Healthy diets and healthy lifestyles are promoted well. A child who had to have a planned operation has received very good support. Incentives have been used well to encourage her to do the physiotherapy necessary to ensure a good recovery.

The staff team has completely changed since the last inspection. However, this has been appropriately managed so that there has been minimal impact on the progress and experience of children.

The new staff require additional support to consistently adhere to the model of care that is used in the home.

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

Children feel safe in the home. Despite the high turnover of staff, children have established relationships and trust the staff. Behaviour management strategies are built around the implementation of good routines. Because children are generally settled into these routines, there has been a reduction in challenging behaviours.

Staff understand children's starting points. They understand the factors that lead children to engage in potentially harmful behaviours. Staff work well with other agencies to support young people to reduce risk-taking behaviours. The manager has systems in place to plot and track behaviour management incidents and evidences where children are making progress. Missing-from-care incidents have not taken place.

The use of physical intervention had briefly increased but has now reduced and stabilised. Management evaluation and scrutiny of restraint practice has also improved after a period when oversight had not been good enough. This improvement means that records are better, debriefs now take place consistently, and staff are able to reflect on their practice.

Staff and the manager understand their safeguarding duties and responsibilities. They have strong and effective working relationships with other safeguarding agencies. When children do make complaints, these are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken.

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

There has been a significant amount of change in the leadership and management of the home. The home has been without a registered manager for an extensive period of time. The inconsistency in management has had an impact on the running of the home. A recently appointed acting manager is now in post. He is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Management instability has coincided with a period of high staff turnover. The new manager has worked hard to ensure that the new team delivers consistent care. However, staff have not always been well supported through their induction process. The number of new staff meant that there were not always enough senior staff available to

ensure that new starters felt well supported. At times, trainees have supported each other. The new acting manager has rectified this. He now has two strong, experienced seniors in post. Consequently, staff morale has recently improved.

Children have not been consulted about staffing changes. This has left children wondering where significant people in their lives have moved to, and why. For children who have experienced early childhood trauma, this can have a major impact. The service has not fully recognised the importance of preparing children for changes in care staff.

The registered manager has a clear understanding of how the home can improve. The manager has introduced a development plan with a focus on developing and stabilising the staff team.

Although there are examples of the manager successfully challenging local authorities to ensure that children have access to the services that they need, this is not yet consistent. For example, more could be done to challenge placing authorities to better support children who are planning to move on from the home. Some children might also benefit from independent advocacy support.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC462149

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd

Registered provider address: 1 Merchants Place, River Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 1BX

Responsible individual: Donna Carlin

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector(s)

Bev Allison, social care inspector

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