

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11 April 2016
Unique reference number	1212708
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pathway Care Solutions II Limited
Registered person address	14 Regent Street, Nottingham NG1 5BQ
Responsible individual	Peter Valleley
Registered manager	Michelle Danvers
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	11 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people settle quickly because of good placement matching and a very friendly, welcoming group of staff and young people. Relationships between young people, and with staff, are very good.
- Young people make progress in their education, health, and emotional well-being through good partnership working and effective use of key work.
- The home is a safe environment where young people feel increasingly secure and well cared for. Staff help young people to learn how to keep themselves safe. Risk-taking behaviours are reducing as a result.
- Staff are very motivated and enthusiastic. The staff and young people create a very positive atmosphere.
- The manager is experienced and enthusiastic to learn more. She is ably supported by her staff team and by senior personnel and managers.
- Three recommendations are made. These relate to the quality of record keeping, the provision of training and the upkeep of training records.

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

Recommendations

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

- Case records must be kept up to date. ('The Guide to the Quality Standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The home should have enough suitably trained staff to meet the assessed needs of all the children. This is in relation to staff undertaking training about sexual exploitation. ('The Guide to the Quality Standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan. The plan should detail any training required for staff, should be updated to include any new training completed by staff, and be used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff. ('The Guide to the Quality Standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection following registration of the home in November 2015.

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>This home was registered in November 2015. Two of the young people previously lived in another of the organisation’s homes, but the move to this home affords them much greater living space. The home is well decorated and furnished, and provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere. A third young person moved into the home last month and has already settled due to the welcoming and supportive staff and friendly young people. The placing social worker said: ‘He has only been here a few weeks but the experience so far is very positive. There is good communication, there are no problems, and he has settled really well. Everyone has really made an effort.’</p> <p>Good placement matching by the registered manager ensures that the needs of the young person can be met. Effective challenge by the manager and staff ensures that any outstanding paperwork is completed and forwarded to the home. This ensures a good mix in the home, and that young people’s varied needs are met. Young people are happy here. They enjoy the company of each other and have good relationships with staff.</p> <p>Staff, education providers and careers officers work closely and effectively with young people to secure the most appropriate education, training and work opportunities. Packages of academic study, combined with practical courses and work placement opportunities, help young people to reach their potential.</p> <p>Young people’s health is improving. They enjoy a range of healthy and varied foods, and help to shop for, and prepare, meals. Staff work effectively with other agencies and professionals to support young people to understand their mental health and emotional well-being. Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in managing self-harm. For one young person, this has resulted in a significant decrease in self-harm, as she is increasingly able to discuss any concerns with staff. One medical professional referred to the home as ‘the most stable placement this young person has ever had.’ Personal hygiene continues to improve and young people are increasingly taking pride in their appearance. They develop confidence in their own identities and are supported by staff to explore their sexuality, thus promoting positive relationships and friendships.</p> <p>Young people enjoy a wide range of activities in the local area and further afield. They experience new activities such as ice skating and rides at theme parks. Activities with other neighbouring homes are encouraged, which helps to foster appropriate peer relationships. The older young people enjoy socialising with their</p>	

friends and managing their own free time. This helps to build their independence skills. Friends are also made welcome at the home, which further highlights the welcoming and homely nature of this home.

Young people undertake a range of chores within the home, such as cooking, cleaning and shopping. Some are embarking on an independence programme to further promote their skills and to prepare them for moving on.

Staff support detailed and clear contact arrangements effectively. One young person is currently establishing contact with her wider family. Staff are supporting her with her expectations and anxieties as she meets her extended family and explores her cultural heritage.

Care planning is good. Placement plans detail the aims and objectives of the placements and identify young people's individual needs. Key work sessions focus on subjects that need to be addressed in order to help young people achieve their potential. One young person's file contains an element of misleading and conflicting information. The registered manager is taking action to ensure that the information is correct. This will provide the young person with a better understanding of their care when they wish to access their records. The manager and staff share a very small office. The cramped nature of this room does not lend itself to being an environment where careful recording is promoted, and this may result in further inaccuracies in recording. A recommendation is made to ensure that all records are kept up to date. The manager is reviewing the office space with the organisation.

Young people are consulted on all aspects of their care and the running of the home. This is done through key work, regular house meetings and attendance at review meetings. They make good use of the advocate who visits the home, ensuring that their wishes and feelings are heard. Positive relationships with staff enable young people to share their views and opinions confidently at any time.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people say that they feel safe living here. One said that the support from staff helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe. Staff work closely with other agencies and charities to help young people to understand and reduce risk. Sharing of information is good and helps to protect young people further. For example, staff had some concerns about a local club young people were attending and worked with the club to help revise its confidentiality policy. The risk of sexual exploitation has previously been high, but the strong relationships with staff, the</p>	

sharing of information in professional forums, and very good key work on the subject has helped to reduce the risk substantially. Specific training in this topic would enhance this work and provide an underpinning knowledge for staff.

Staff work hard to prevent incidents of young people going missing from the home. They provide a number of positive activities to occupy young people and discuss with them the risks associated with being absent from the home. The local police support staff in this work, visiting the home to chat to the young people about keeping safe. The majority of incidents currently relate to young people staying out late and not returning phone calls from staff. Return interviews indicate that young people just want to spend time with their friends. Staff continue to work hard, discussing this with young people and their social workers and, as a result, these incidents are reducing over time. Detailed behaviour management plans and risk assessments help keep young people safe while allowing them the freedom to explore their growing independence.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through an incentive and reward programme. Consequences for negative behaviour are appropriate and help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour. The use of negative consequences is decreasing as behaviour continues to improve. The use of physical intervention is very rare, and, when it is used, it is appropriate and recorded in good detail. Staff and young people discuss the intervention, ensuring that learning for all is gained from the incident.

Staff understand what to do if they are worried that a young person is being abused or has been abused. Relationships with the relevant safeguarding agencies are well established. Young people are protected by a range of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff are trained in safeguarding, managing allegations, medication practice and first aid. Staff are aware of the risks posed by terrorism and extremism, and resources are available to support their understanding. In addition, a training course has been identified to enable staff to enhance their knowledge and to protect young people. This keeps young people safe.

The home is safe and well maintained. Health and safety checks ensure that the building remains safe. Frequent fire drills are held and, when young people do not evacuate the home, the manager invites the fire service to talk to young people about the dangers of fire. This ensures that they learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is relatively new in post but has a wealth of experience in care settings. She is currently undertaking the appropriate qualifications for management. She is highly motivated and enthusiastic to learn and to continue to improve the care for young people, promoting their positive outcomes. She is effectively supported by managers from other homes and from senior personnel in the organisation.</p> <p>The staff are a real strength of this home, bringing varied skills and experience to the team. There is a good mix of gender and age, and staff are good role models for the young people. There is a real air of positivity about the home, and staff are very enthusiastic about their roles. This contributes to the fact that they enjoy excellent relationships with the young people. Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level, are on the relevant course, or have been referred for a place on the course. Probationary staff are referred once they have completed their probationary period. This will ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified in required timescales. No agency staff are currently used in this home. Any additional staff are sourced from other homes in the organisation and are known to the young people. This provides consistency in their care.</p> <p>Staff are well supported through effective and regular supervision and through team meetings. Staff meetings are used effectively to share information, communicate any updates to plans, and provide a learning forum for staff. Staff have attended a range of training, including mandatory courses such as safeguarding, medication, and physical intervention. In addition, most have completed courses relevant to the needs of young people, such as self-harm training. Other areas such as sexual exploitation have not yet been fully explored through formal training, although staff are using a range of resources and working with other professionals to build their knowledge in this area. Staff records of training are not kept in good order and some records for staff are still located in other homes. This means it is difficult for the manager to ascertain the needs of the workforce and to develop a detailed and effective workforce development plan.</p> <p>Complaints are well managed and young people are kept informed throughout the process, ensuring that they are aware that their views are taken seriously.</p> <p>The strengths and weaknesses of the home are understood by the registered manager. She said: 'The young people are the strength of this home. They are a great group. Staff are strong and have really developed as a team.' A detailed improvement plan provides an overarching framework for development and improvement and this is reviewed monthly, identifying where progress has been made and areas that require further work. This ensures that improvement is on track.</p>	

Monitoring is robust. The registered manager takes action to address any shortfalls identified by the independent visitor in order to improve the care, safety and outcomes for young people. The managers' review report provides an evaluative narrative of the care and identifies the progress that young people are making. The manager performs a range of daily checks, which help to keep her informed of the events in the home and of day-to-day care of the young people.

The home's statement of purpose provides stakeholders with an understanding of the care provided and reflects the ethos of the home. The young people's guide was developed prior to the new home opening, and the manager is looking to review this with the young people so that it more accurately reflects their views about their home.

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 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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