

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Unique reference number	1212117
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 Vallelly
Registered manager	Delroy King
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	10 May 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 make good, and in some areas excellent, progress, given their starting points. This home provides a stable environment for young people who have experienced large numbers of placement breakdowns.
- Relationships between young people and staff are good. Staff understand the needs of young people and how best to support them to make progress.
- The home is a safe environment. Staff know how to keep young people safe. Risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing, are reducing as a result.
- A diverse staff group brings a variety of skills and experience to the team, benefitting the young people.
- The manager is very experienced and is ably supported by a well-respected deputy.
- One recommendation is made. This is in relation to the poor quality recording in several aspects of the home's operation.

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 recommendation:

- 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

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 judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>This home was registered in November 2015. One of the young people and some of the staff team previously lived in another of the organisation's homes. This home provides increased space for young people to thrive and develop. One member of staff commented, 'This house is better, more room for them to grow.'</p> <p>Young people have made good progress in all areas of their lives since moving here. This is due, in part, to the stability of the placement, especially having regard to the numerous placement breakdowns experienced by these young people previously. Education is an area where young people have made, and continue to make, progress. The progress of one young person has been excellent, given her starting point. Having previously not engaged in education she is now ready to take nine GCSEs in the coming weeks. The registered manager said: 'We may be her support, but it is down to her that she has progressed.' Where young people are not in mainstream education, staff work closely with alternative education providers to ensure that the right package of education is identified. Currently, this means that activities take place in various venues with different tutors. This can mean that there is a period of inconsistency and uncertainty for young people as the programme develops, but they are kept informed of changes, and staff and learning mentors listen to their views.</p> <p>Young people's health is good and improving, especially with regard to healthier eating and physical exercise. Young people help to choose healthy meals and eat a varied diet. One young person has taken up boxing. This improves his physical strength and provides a good opportunity for him to socialise with other people in the community. Some young people occasionally smoke, and smoking cessation work has been offered, but not taken up. One young person has, however, been encouraged to stop, as staff have discussed the impact on their health and their ability to continue with their physical activities. Staff help young people to understand their emotional health and encourage them to express their feelings. Advice and guidance from the therapy team provides staff with an understanding of the underlying causes of challenging behaviours. This supports the development of effective behaviour management strategies and has led to a significant decrease in self-harm.</p> <p>Staff successfully facilitate the rebuilding of family relationships. Arrangements for contact ensure that young people are safe. Staff work closely with parents, helping them to improve and develop their parenting skills. Young people enjoy friendships with peers from other local homes in the organisation, building their social</p>	

interaction skills while enjoying varied activities.

Young people undertake an independence programme helping them to gain skills for when they move on from the home. They learn to manage their finances; make their own appointments; to shop for, prepare and cook meals; and to do their laundry. One young person is preparing to move soon, and she recognises the help and support that staff have given. She commented to the independent visitor that staff have enabled her to be the young person she is now, and that she is ready to move on.

Senior staff and the registered manager scrutinise potential referrals carefully, ensuring good placement matching and that the home can meet all identified needs. Good communication with previous placements ensures that all information is available before deciding on a new placement.

Care planning is good. Placement plans enable staff to have a good understanding of the needs of each young person. Key work sessions focus on subjects that need to be addressed in order to help young people to achieve their potential. For example, a significant amount of work is undertaken to support young people to address racist and homophobic language and views. This enables young people to learn respect and to understand difference. Staff and young people enjoy very positive relationships. Positive role models help young people to develop skills in social interaction and to improve their behaviour.

One young person felt that decisions about his care are sometimes made without his input and that he cannot see his records. This was not borne out during the inspection. Young people share their views through resident meetings, regular key work and with independent visitors to the home. Decisions made about care arrangements are discussed with them. The registered manager is, however, taking the concern forward, reminding young people how they can share their views and see information that is recorded about them.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Staff understand what to do if they are worried that a young person is being abused or has been abused, and relationships with the relevant safeguarding agencies are well established. Staff are trained in safeguarding, managing allegations, medication practice, physical intervention and first aid. Staff are aware of the risks posed by terrorism and extremism and have received training in this area. The registered manager has undertaken training in tackling sexual exploitation and he is disseminating this learning to the team. This helps to keep</p>	

young people safe.

The number of incidents where young people have gone missing has decreased. This is due in part to a young person moving on from the home, but is also because of the effective work of staff. When young people have been missing, detailed reports provide a clear picture of actions taken to ensure that they are safe and well. When independent return interviews have not taken place, the responsible agency has been challenged appropriately. The information from these interviews has not always been shared with the staff. However, information gained from these interviews has generated multi-agency strategy meetings where staff have been present. The manager understands the importance of ensuring that information from return interviews is shared in future to help prevent incidents.

The home is well maintained. Health and safety checks are carried out routinely to ensure that the building remains safe. Frequent fire drills mean that staff and young people know how to evacuate safely. Visits from the fire service help young people to understand fire safety and to learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and with each other. Positive behaviour is encouraged through individual incentive and reward programmes. One young person is able to explain how he feels through a visual 'mood chart'. This helps staff to respond to him sensitively. Young people receive consequences for negative behaviour. These are mostly relevant to the behaviour, such as washing the pots for not sitting at the table for a meal. The registered manager reviews the consequences and their effectiveness but does not always record where he has challenged or reversed a measure. For example, following a series of similar consequences for repeated incidents of poor language, he decided to reverse the process and promote positive language using rewards. This has already had a positive impact with incidents reducing. This positive action is not recorded on the consequence log, which inhibits the learning from the manager's review. Similarly, the positive and robust action taken with regard to an incident referred by a tutor has not been recorded, thereby providing a misleading view of the incident.

One consequence record refers to an incident of bullying. This was investigated during the inspection and found to be an inaccurate record of the event. The use of the term 'bullying' was misleading. Staff carried out a significant piece of work, ensuring that a respectful and harmonious relationship between those involved was achieved.

Some weak recording is also evident in risk assessments for self-harm. Parts of these assessments are very generalised, rather than individual, providing an overview of risk and prevention rather than specific details. However, staff can demonstrate their understanding of the risks that each young person poses and their individual vulnerabilities. Incidents of self-harm have decreased, and staff have received training in responding to self-harm and ligatures.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is very experienced and is currently undertaking the appropriate qualifications for management. As well as managing this home, he undertakes the management of another registered service. A highly competent deputy manager very ably supports him. Staff and other professionals say that the deputy manager does, 'outstanding work'.</p> <p>The diverse staff group brings a variety of skills and experience to the team. There is a good mix of gender, race and age, and staff act as good role models for the young people. Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level, on the relevant course, or will be referred once they have completed their probationary period. This will ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified in the required timescales.</p> <p>Staff benefit from a range of good quality training. This includes mandatory courses and those relating to the specific needs of young people. Staff also identify the training they believe is required for the team. For example, one member of staff identified the need for all staff to understand attachment, and training has since been provided in this area. This not only benefits the young people but also gives staff confidence to share their views.</p> <p>Support for staff is good. Staff handovers, team meetings and supervisions are used to good effect, to provide learning and opportunities, to share practice and to discuss any concerns.</p> <p>The strengths and weaknesses of the home are understood by the registered manager and the staff team. A detailed improvement plan provides an overarching framework for development and improvement. This is reviewed monthly, identifying where progress has been made and areas that require further work. This ensures that improvement is on track.</p> <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 progress of young people is recorded and monitored daily and compiled into weekly reports shared with placing social workers. Monthly reviews provide a good overview of the progress that young people make.</p> <p>The registered manager and deputy provide appropriate challenge to other agencies and professionals where they feel decisions are not in the best interests of the young person. They work closely with others to improve outcomes for young</p>	

people and to provide the most appropriate and good care for young people.

Good management of a concern from a neighbour has led to a shared understanding of the ethos of the home and improved relationships. This helps young people to feel a valued part of their local community.

The minor shortfalls identified in this inspection all stem from poor, inaccurate and unclear recording of information, or a failure to record work undertaken. This means that it is difficult to understand the depth of work carried out and does not provide information in a way that is helpful to 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 children looked after 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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