

1212708

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd 04004053

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people. It is owned and run by an independent provider. The home provides care and accommodation for young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 11 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because

- A requirement made at the last inspection, to ensure that staff seek medical

attention for young people following incidents of drug misuse, has not been met. This means that young people do not always receive the treatment they need in a timely manner.

- Staff lack training in issues around drug and alcohol misuse. This means that they may not know how to respond to young people who use drugs.
- Staff response to some situations has been poor, increasing risk to young people when they are absent from the home.
- Recording requires improvement in a number of areas.
- Management of the home is less effective in the absence of the registered manager, with a lack of communication in the team.

The children's home's strengths

- Relationships between staff and young people are good and young people feel able to raise any concerns or issues with staff.
- Young people make some progress in educational attainment, independence skills and emotional well-being.
- Physical intervention is rarely used and there have been no incidents since the last inspection.
- The registered manager is passionate about improving young people's lives and provides a nurturing role model for young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/04/2016	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(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
<p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff –</p> <p>if they consider a placing authority's or 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))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the need for a child's up-to-date pathway plan to be in place.</p>	30/06/2017
<p>The health and well-being standard is that –</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that staff understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1) (a) and (2)(a)(iv))</p> <p>This is in relation to staff undertaking training in awareness of drug and alcohol issues.</p>	30/06/2017
<p>The health and well-being standard is that –</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that each child has access to such medical advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a) and (2)(c))</p>	30/06/2017
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if</p>	30/06/2017

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (2) (a)(i) and (vi))	
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Recommendations

- Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7) This is in relation to staff consistently pursuing education attendance.
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12) This relates to staff lack of training in drug and alcohol issues.
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place for each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- All children's case records must be kept up to date and stored securely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3) This specifically relates to the upkeep of medical records.
- Staff should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) This is in relation to the accurate recording of sanctions and their effectiveness, young people's views of sanctions, incident records, and actions discussed in staff supervision.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Progress for young people is mixed, with young people doing well in some areas and not progressing so well in others. Similarly, experiences are varied, with young people living through some poor day-to-day events, but also enjoying some positive experiences and forging positive relationships with staff.

Staff try to support young people to eat healthily and encourage those on independence programmes to prepare and cook nutritious meals. Weight loss is a concern for some of the young people and may be associated with their increased drug and alcohol misuse. They have access to agencies that specialise in this area but do not always engage. Not all staff have undertaken training in relation to drug and alcohol use. As a result, not all staff know what action to take when a young person is under the influence of substances. A requirement was made at the last inspection to ensure that in such situations staff seek medical advice. This has not been met. Staff did not seek professional help during a recent incident and, as a result, put a young person's health at risk. The requirement is repeated, and a further requirement made to ensure that all staff undertake training in substance and alcohol misuse. In addition, a recommendation is made to ensure that all health records are kept up to date as several were found to be incomplete or out of date.

One young person is making progress in his education, attaining a reasonable level in a number of subjects. His attendance is somewhat erratic and some inconsistent staff practice compounds this. Another young person has recently started a traineeship. This follows quite an unsettled period for him regarding his education and training opportunities.

Staff support young people to develop independence skills such as shopping, budgeting, cooking and cleaning. Progress is monitored, identifying where further work is required. Staff do not always challenge the placing authority when they have concerns about the young person's future, either moving on from the home or leaving care. For example, one young person's pathway plan is significantly out of date and the social worker has not been actively pursued to produce this.

Staff try to encourage young people to engage in a range of activities, including community events, to broaden their experiences. Contact arrangements for all young people are clearly documented and staff support appropriate contact with family and friends. Contact for some has increased, enabling them to meet with extended family.

The mental health of some of the young people has significantly improved while living here. One professional, talking of a young person who recently moved on from the home, described their mental health as the best it had been.

Young people regularly attend house meetings, giving them the opportunity to share

their views on their care and the daily routines of the home. Positive relationships with staff enable young people to raise any concerns at any time. They know how to make a complaint and whom to talk to if they have a concern. No complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Placement plans identify the goals of young people's placement. Daily and weekly reports identify progress towards these targets for staff and placing social workers.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff response to two recent incidents has not been robust or proactive, potentially increasing risks for vulnerable young people while in the community. This is despite clear, individual risk assessments being in place, providing details of action to take to protect young people. Poor communication and a lack of prioritisation by staff led to a young person not being picked up from his work placement when he should have been, resulting in him going missing from the home. Similarly, staff failed to assess the risks adequately and respond appropriately when a young person had telephoned to be collected in the early hours of the morning following his absence from the home. Eventually, police returned him to the home. There have been a number of incidents of going missing since the last inspection and very few return home interviews have been conducted. When these are completed they have not yet been shared with the staff, so they are unable to learn from such incidents.

Recording of incidents requires improvement. Records are often incomplete, lack clarity and do not aid reflection or learning for staff or young people. When the registered manager is absent, there is little overview or monitoring of incidents. Sanctions also are poorly recorded, with the effectiveness of the sanction not always explored and young people's views not always recorded. On occasions where effectiveness has been reviewed, it has led to improved practice by staff and identified clear learning for young people.

Young people engage effectively with the youth offending service in order to address their offending behaviour. Positive behaviour in the home and community is encouraged by staff, young people engage in a reward programme, gaining financial recognition for positive behaviour and completion of various tasks. Physical intervention is rarely used in this home and there have been no such incidents since the last inspection.

Staff and managers undertake a range of training including safeguarding young people, managing allegations, physical intervention and restorative practice. Where staff await a facilitated course in areas such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, they undertake an online course to ensure that they have some basic knowledge. As already stated, a number of staff lack training in drug and alcohol awareness.

Staff understand the procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns and allegations. There have been no child protection referrals or allegations since the last inspection.

Robust recruitment processes ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable persons working with them.

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

The registered manager exudes warmth and nurture towards young people and other professionals recognise the strengths and passion she brings to this home. They also recognise that the home does not operate so effectively in her absence. Evidence of this was also found during the inspection, with a lack of direction and inconsistent practice when she is absent. The health-related incident, necessitating a repeat of the requirement made at the last inspection, took place in her absence. This happened despite the shortfalls from the last inspection being discussed at length in team meetings.

Staff receive regular supervision from senior staff and records of supervision outline the areas discussed. These records lack description of decisions made around practice and action to take, thus limiting the learning and progress of staff from this process.

External monitoring is robust. The independent visitor attends monthly, providing an account of progress and identifying any shortfalls in the home. The manager acts swiftly to address any concerns raised. The home's development plan outlines a number of areas for progression in the coming year. Every month, progress towards each target is recorded. Currently this lacks evidence of the achievements and the manager has sought help and advice from colleagues in other homes to improve the quality of the recording and evidencing.

Since the last inspection, staff shortages have caused additional workloads for members of staff, including the registered manager. Recent recruitment has already relieved much of the pressure, with new staff settling in quickly and bringing fresh ideas to the team.

Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level, are currently undertaking the relevant course, or are new to the service. This means that young people receive support from suitably qualified staff.

A detailed statement of purpose and young people's guide ensure that stakeholders and young people understand what the home provides and what staff hope young people will achieve.

Staff work with a number of agencies including mental health teams, youth offending service, education providers and police. Placing authorities receive regular updates on progress and report that the registered manager attends meetings, ensuring effective communication.

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 difference 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: 1212708

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions Ltd 04004053

Registered provider address: 1 Merchant's Place, River Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 1BX

Responsible individual: Alexandra Bryn

Registered manager: Michelle Danvers

Inspector

Judith Longden, social care inspector

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