

# 1241897

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is one of five children's homes run by a private organisation. The home provides accommodation for up to eight children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 May 2017

**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 **good**

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

**Date of last inspection:**

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Staff provide nurturing care and they value each child as a unique individual.
- There are good relationships between the staff and the children.

- The children's behaviour is excellent and based on mutually respectful relationships with the staff.
- The children are safe. Risk-taking behaviours have greatly reduced because of living at the home.
- Staff support the children's education and pursue professionals to ensure that each child has education provision.
- Staff develop and maintain strong professional partnerships that support children's care.
- The home is staffed well. The staff provide the children with a wide range of positive role models.

#### The children's home's areas for development

- The resources required to ensure that the home fully meets the objectives promised in the statement of purpose have been withheld. This is in regard to staff training and the refurbishment of the garden area.
- There are hazards in the outdoor area that have been left, despite the fact that these could cause an accidental injury.
- External monitoring is not consistently robust and fails to provide for consultation with children, placing authorities or staff.
- There is a lack of information technology equipment in the home.

## 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>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 the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(d))</p> <p>This is in particular regard to a number of hazards present in the outdoor areas surrounding the home.</p>  | 09/06/2017 |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p> <p>This is in particular regard to providing training for the staff.</p> | 04/08/2017 |
| <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person, if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, and relatives, as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44(2)(a))</p>  | 09/06/2017 |

## Recommendations

- Provide children with access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there is specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- The registered person is responsible for leading a team which provides high quality care for all of the children living at the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children value the staff and they enjoy living at the home. They like the environment and the location and have a very good rapport with the staff. The children know that coming to live at this home has made a positive difference to their lives.

The children feel cared for and nurtured by the staff. They understand why they are living at the home. One child said about a member of staff, 'She's like my big sister. All of the staff are great.' The children really enjoy their time at the home because the staff are upbeat and energetic. The staff are genuine and passionate about the children's care. They speak about the children with pride and emotion. They provide a balance between nurture and safe boundaries.

Good orderly routines support the children's school attendance and provide structure to the day. One child is in full-time education and the staff facilitate the daily transport. The children are taken to school for their exams and collected. Staff help the children to prepare mentally for exams and to think about their future prospects. A member of school support staff said, 'I have met all of the staff and they all seem to be very good with her [child]. The relationships are wonderful. It is so nice to think that they love and care about her as much as we do.' One child has been out of education since January 2017. He is new to the home and has plans to start college in September. An open evening has been booked at the local college for him to attend. The staff, with the support of the social worker, are actively requesting a home tutor for him. In the interim, the staff are providing structured daily activities that build life skills. This child is up early, showered and actively helping with house chores. These chores include budgeting, shopping, cooking, cleaning and car care. The child was part way through a GCSE syllabus and left his school in December 2017. Due to scheduled coursework and exams, schools are not able to offer him a place before the summer holidays. The manager is making every effort to ensure that there is a home education package in

place for the last half of the summer term. The child is keen to access volunteer work or to gain a part-time job and staff have approached local businesses with him. The efforts and research into options are limited to looking with the staff, because there is no computer in the home for the children to use and no separate telephone.

The children are supported to have active and healthy lifestyles. Food is freshly prepared and made from scratch. The children participate in the preparation of meals. The children are supported with their hospital appointments and promptly registered with health professionals in the local area. Smoking cessation work is evident from key worker sessions and none of the children currently smoke. The staff provide individual health plans and an outcome record for all appointments. This ensures that follow-up actions resulting from health appointments are organised.

The staff are proactive and efficient in arranging visits for the children to see their friends and families. Family members are encouraged to visit the home in accordance with care plans and the children's wishes.

The interior is adequately presented and the decor is mainly fresh and modern. The exterior has not changed since the purchase of the home. The exterior presents several hazards and a poorly maintained outdoor area. This reduces the use of the area because it is unappealing and unsightly. This does not prevent the children from going out as staff take them to local parks for walks and ensure that they have opportunities to be outside.

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

The children in this home are safe. There are no risk-taking behaviours and the children are relaxed with one another and staff. A warm and humorous rapport prevails. There is ample staff support to provide stability for children who have experienced change and uncertainty. One social worker said, 'Relationships with the staff have been wonderful.'

The admission risk assessments are strong and consider the worst-case scenarios for new children and the children already living at the home. This provides a safe admission process.

Children's behaviour management plans and risk assessments clearly identify behavioural triggers for individuals. These plans are regularly updated following observations and incidents and the risk scores are adjusted accordingly. These assessments are relevant and evaluative, summarising the level of risks to all. The assessments sampled during the inspection demonstrated that the risk scores have been reduced due to there being no incidents. The use of these robust risk assessments protects the children and the staff.

The staff are successful in keeping the children safe. One child who has a prolific history of going missing from home and offending has had no incidents of any type. The social worker reported that since being at the home, the child 'Makes good choices and is

happy to spend time in the home.' The Youth Offending Panel reviews for the child have been positive. This has enabled the child to reflect on the past and to experience the benefits of positive change.

Neither of the children who are currently living at the home have been missing from the home. After the home opened, there were a high number of notifications made during a period of one month when one child kept going missing from the home. These were all short-duration incidents and the staff followed the home's missing from home protocols. There has been a complete reduction in these incidents, with no notifications made in the last six weeks.

Records of behaviour management demonstrate that the staff take a positive reinforcement approach and that the emphasis is on the efforts made by the children. 90% of each record is an acknowledgment of positive behaviour. There was a short period during which a behaviour status system was introduced. The manager monitored this and, after discussion with the children, decided to abort the system. This shows that children are involved in the decision making in the home.

The staff occasionally use physical intervention. There are three guided holds recorded, although none in the last three months. Staff are trained in safe-hold techniques and they record any situations when they 'shield' or 'guide' children to ensure their safety or the safety of others.

The safeguarding systems in the home are known to staff. Staff confidently explain the processes in place to safeguard the children. They have been trained in managing child sexual exploitation, although no children in the home are currently at actual risk of this. The staff understand whistle-blowing policies and how to raise practice concerns. The policies and systems in place work well to safeguard the children and staff in the home.

The interior of the home is free from hazards. Fire prevention equipment and appliances are serviced and checked systematically. However, the paved outdoor area has not been maintained or monitored properly by staff. Three of the steps leading to the lounge patio doors have been shattered, leaving loose bricks and broken concrete. A wire hangs from the flat roof at the rear of the property and a manhole cover has rusted away. Drains are covered in debris and one is blocked. A ladder was unattended below the flat roof. The area presents unnecessary hazards to the children and the staff and looks unkempt.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager was appointed when the home opened. He is an experienced manager and qualified to level 5. The management structure is well established, with a regional manager closely supporting the home. There have been recent changes to the structure of the organisation. A good level of communication to explain the ethos of the organisation, its background and the senior management structure has been carried out. This includes leaflets for the children and roadshows for the staff.

The home was opened in December 2016 by an organisation that failed to deliver resources and invest properly in the service. This led to shortfalls in the training provision for staff, renovating the outdoor area and the provision of resources in the home. The regional manager has raised these issues with the newly structured registered provider, who has promptly responded and pledged to address these shortfalls without delay. This demonstrates a commitment to improve the home.

The majority of the new staff do not hold the level 3 diploma for residential childcare. Out of eight staff, there are only two qualified members of staff and there is one staff member who has a related degree. Although all of the staff are booked onto the level 3 qualification, this has been delayed because a previous training company failed to provide training as agreed. The number of staff on duty is high, as support is one adult to one child. The manager has appointed staff for their calibre and approach as opposed to being qualified. The support levels are very good and the staff have a fresh and enthusiastic approach, therefore the impact on the children is positive. Staff recognise and value individuals and the children have responded very well to this.

External monitoring started well, with a number of valid points raised that identified shortfalls in practice. Over time, the reports have become more 'lightweight' and fail to provide an evaluation of the impact of the quality of care provided. There is no consultation with social workers, children or staff of any depth. This does not give a rounded view of the care.

The manager has a basic grasp of the home's strengths and weaknesses, although efforts are mainly focused on continuing to support the children and strengthening the staff team. Managerial monitoring is routine and this has enabled the manager to make adjustments to some processes used by the staff and to improve the children's experiences. The development plan is out of date and several aspects have not been achieved or accomplished. This is beyond the manager's control due to the organisational changes and resources being withheld.

The manager advocates well for children and chases up appointments and responses from social workers. In particular, he has chased the social worker and virtual head of schools for a home tutor for a child.

The children have a voice in this home. The manager has promoted clear boundaries, with a fair and democratic approach. The children's views are valued and properly considered. This encourages the children to share their views and promotes equality of opportunity.

## **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:** 1241897

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Pathways Care Group Limited

**Registered provider address:** 238a, Station Road, Addlestone KT15 2PS

**Responsible individual:** Lisa Deane

**Registered manager:** David Sanders

## Inspector

Deirdra Keating, social care inspector

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