

1212117

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 care for three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a private organisation.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 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: 20 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Most young people make very good progress in education, with excellent support from staff.
- It supports and reviews contact arrangements very well, thus improving family

relationships.

- Young people participate in all aspects of their care and in the running of the home.
- There continues to be a reduction in risk-taking behaviour, such as going missing and self-harm. This is due, in part, to very good partnership work.
- Although relatively new in post, the registered manager and her deputy have made numerous improvements. They inspire staff to learn and develop continually, providing increasingly good care for young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Consequences do not always reflect the nature of the behaviour and their effectiveness is not always reviewed.
- Recording is an area for improvement. The manager is seeking training for all staff to improve recording, but a number of errors and omissions were found in reports during the inspection.
- While staff gain much knowledge on drugs and alcohol misuse from their partnership work and a range of resources, many have not yet completed formal training in this area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirement

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 person must ensure that, within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii))	30/09/2017

Recommendations

- Staff should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This is in relation to the recording of educational progress, including progress outside of education hours, and the updating of a young person's risk assessment with information about a curfew. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children. This is in relation to the provision of drug and alcohol misuse training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good and, in some aspects, excellent progress given their starting points. They recognise the progress they have made. When asked, one young person said the thing she has progressed most with 'is me'. There is generally an atmosphere of fun and laughter in the home, borne out of positive relationships.

Supporting and enabling contact with family and friends is an area of particular strength in this home. For one young person, family contact remains the most consistent, positive factor in an otherwise quite turbulent life. For others, contact is increasing and family ties strengthening. This helps young people understand their identity and improves their

self-worth.

Staff tenacity in supporting young people's education is excellent. For one young person, this continued support has enabled them to sit their examinations when it was thought they would not be able to complete their formal education. Some young people have secured places on further education courses beginning in September. One young person is successfully combining her education with part-time work. This is broadening her social network as well as improving her confidence and self-esteem. For others, education is proving to be a struggle, particularly their attendance and application to study. The recording of overall progress in education for some young people is not updated regularly. In addition, daily records do not evidence the learning from opportunities outside the formal education environment. This means it is not always clear just how much progress young people make in their learning.

Health is an area of varied progress. For some young people, their physical and emotional health continues to improve. They engage positively with staff and other agencies and learn how to take care of themselves. Drug and alcohol specialists work alongside staff to engage those young people who continue to take drugs.

Young people enjoy spending time outside the home, with friends but also taking part in activities together and with staff. This includes visits to art galleries and museums, encouraging their interests and hobbies. Some young people are also planning a holiday with staff. This provides opportunities and experiences that, for some, are new.

Young people are at varied stages in learning skills for independence. They undertake a range of chores within the home and explore how to budget effectively, helping them when they leave the home.

Care plans generally provide a good level of detail about young people, including their history, aims of the placement and targets, to help staff understand how best to care for young people and help them achieve. One shortfall was identified relating to information about a young person's curfew, and a recommendation is made to ensure that all information is correct. The recording of progress is erratic, and the registered manager has requested report-writing training for all staff to improve written work across the home. Meanwhile, a new format for presenting progress has recently been explored. This consists of a visual electronic format that can be readily accessed and updated by staff and the young person concerned. This is in the process of being rolled out, providing other options for depicting young people's development.

Participation and involvement of young people are key strengths. Engagement in house meetings, attendance at reviews and regular key-work sessions enable young people to express their views and share any concerns. One recent activity involved young people standing for election and taking part in a range of activities to earn rewards and 'win the voters over'. This provided much fun and learning and ensured good participation from young people. One young person is supporting other young people in care, acting as a mentor and providing them with support. This also boosts her confidence.

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

Staff work alongside other agencies, including the police, youth offending teams and drug and alcohol services to keep young people as safe as possible. Staff also support young people in understanding how to reduce risks to keep themselves safe. This includes undertaking key-work sessions on appropriate relationships. For some, this has proved highly effective, with a decrease in absence from the home and a reduction in the associated sexual exploitation risks. Others have reduced or stopped self-harming. One young person said that she can see the progress she has made in reducing her self-harm. She explained that this was because she feels safe and able to find different ways and techniques to help steer her away from harming herself. However, risky activities such as drug use and criminal activity continue for one young person, despite their engagement with a range of professionals.

The reduction in incidents of going missing from the home is also attributable to staff having a better understanding of the triggers for this behaviour. For example, it has been identified that contact for one young person is a trigger. Staff have worked alongside the family and placing authority to revise family contact arrangements to help minimise the risk. Any incidents are thoroughly analysed and staff debriefed, ensuring that staff continue to develop their understanding and improve practice.

Learning has also been gained from a recent medication error. A thorough investigation resulted in an improved administration process, making medication practice safer.

Risks presented by social media are managed well. Use of mobile phones, especially internet access, is carefully monitored. The use of social media is discussed in key-work sessions, enabling young people to learn to protect themselves.

Staff and managers understand the role of the designated officer and have good links with safeguarding professionals, forwarding concerns where appropriate. They regularly attend network meetings to discuss safeguarding matters and share information, and remain up to date on current research and issues, keeping young people safe.

The home is well maintained, clean and kept safe. Regular fire, maintenance, and health and safety checks ensure that this remains so. The registered manager reviews the health and safety risk assessment for the home, ensuring that any changes are noted. This meets a recommendation from the last inspection. Regular fire drills mean young people know what to do in the event of a fire.

Staff swiftly address any concerns around bullying, discussing with individuals and with the group. As a result, incidents have reduced and young people generally enjoy each other's company.

The use of physical intervention is rare. When it is used, the recording is detailed and the manager's evaluation provides learning for all involved.

Young people are encouraged to behave positively, with a reward programme for undertaking various tasks and behaving appropriately. Consequences for negative behaviour are inconsistent. Many do not reflect the nature of the incident and staff do not comment on the relevance or effectiveness of the sanction imposed. This means it is difficult to see whether this helps young people understand their actions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An inspirational, motivational manager and deputy continue to improve all aspects of this home and the care provided. The registered manager is currently undertaking the required qualification in leadership and management and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role.

A number of new staff have recently been employed, bringing with them a range of skills, knowledge and experiences to the team. Induction for these new staff is good, with a number of essential training courses provided in this initial period.

Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level, are on the relevant course, or are probationary staff who will be referred once they have completed their probationary period. This will ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified in the required timescales.

Support for staff is good. Staff handovers, team meetings and supervision are used to good effect, providing learning and opportunities to share practice and discuss any concerns. Annual appraisals enable staff to reflect on their growth and development and set targets for the coming year.

Very good partnership work with other agencies, such as the youth offending service, police, health teams and education providers, ensures that young people benefit from all-round support. The registered manager said, 'We continually learn from each other.'

The registered manager and the staff team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. An excellent improvement plan identifies the plans and progress towards these throughout the year. All staff and young people play an active role in contributing to this plan, helping them feel part of the changes and improvements.

Monitoring is good. 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 manager's regular review of the home involves young people, ensuring that their views are heard. Feedback is sought from other agencies and placing authorities during this review and any concerns are acted upon.

The statement of purpose and young person's guide provide information for stakeholders, parents and young people. It informs them about the home and what to expect from the care provided.

Staff benefit from a range of training opportunities on numerous topics, including radicalisation, safeguarding and medication. This helps them to understand the needs of young people and safeguard them effectively. A recommendation is made to ensure that all staff undertake drug and alcohol misuse training. Currently there are numerous resources in the home on this subject, and staff have an excellent relationship with appropriate agencies to support them. Training would enhance this knowledge further.

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. Whenever 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 and 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: 1212117

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: Andrew Smith

Registered manager: Lisa Storer

Inspector

Judith Longden, social care inspector

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