

# 1241897

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Interim 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 date:** 28 February 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 24 May 2017

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## This inspection

### The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.  
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The home's managers and the staff have worked to address the concerns that were identified at the last inspection. However, two requirements need further work. The following improvements were noted during this inspection:

- The home's outdoor areas are free of hazards.
- The children can access a computer to support their education and learning.
- The children, staff and external professionals value the manager and the support that they receive from him.

The home provides a training programme for the staff to support them to care for the children. However, training in important subject matters that could have an impact on the children's lives are not covered in enough detail. This leaves a shortfall in staff

members' knowledge of child sexual exploitation, children who go missing and children who present with self-injurious behaviours. This lack of training can leave staff without the necessary skills and knowledge to safeguard the children for whom they care and has the potential to place children at further risk.

A requirement in respect of the internal monitoring of the home has not been fully addressed. Feedback from children's families and relatives and external professionals is not routinely sought. Consequently, their views are not incorporated into the development of the service. The most recent internal monitoring report lacked rigour. The monitoring failed to review or assess recent missing-from-care episodes. As a result, there were no plans or actions generated to reduce the number of these incidents and keep children from harm.

The admissions and discharges register has not been accurately completed. This means that important information is absent, such as the date on which a child was discharged from the home. Failure to record information accurately means that there is no clear audit trail should this information need to be accessed at a later date.

The staff do not use physical interventions. They use positive and negative consequences to manage children's behaviour consistently to reinforce positive behaviours and to help the children to understand why some behaviours are unacceptable. The staff agree these consequences with the children, which helps to create positive relationships between them.

A clear missing-from-care protocol guides the staff, and the records clearly document incidents of missing from care. However, it is not always clearly recorded whether a child is offered or receives a return-from-missing interview. This makes reviewing, monitoring and devising systems to reduce these incidents difficult. However, incidents of missing for the children who currently live at the home are low.

The location risk assessment considers crime statistics and some local risk factors. However, it does not consider in sufficient detail specific information about the immediate locality. Consequently, some potential risks to children may not be adequately risk assessed.

The staff encourage and facilitate contact between the children and their families in a variety of ways. Contact arrangements are reviewed regularly. This regular contact provides opportunities for the children to make progress and means that they can develop and sustain positive relationships with their families.

There are good relationships between the staff and the children, who speak positively about each other. One child said, 'I like the staff here. We talk about stuff with them and we do activities with them as well. I feel safe here. If I had a problem, I would speak with any member of staff or [manager].'

The staff support the children in their education. One child, who was recently admitted to the home, is home tutored while an education provision is sought. A social worker manager said about this child, 'Staff are on board with education. There had been nothing put in place for [child], but they pursued this matter appropriately but with determination on [child's] behalf until they [staff] got a response.' The other two children attend mainstream schools.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/05/2017	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
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. In particular, a record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child the date of the child's admission to the children's home, the date on which the child ceased to be accommodated in the home, the child's address immediately before being accommodated in the home, the child's address on leaving the home, the child's placing authority and the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is accommodated. (Regulation 37(1) Schedule 4 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))	14/03/2018
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))	14/03/2018

### Recommendations

- 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 to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

In particular, make clear whether a return interview took place and, if so, where

it is recorded.

- Evaluation of missing-from-care incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)

In particular, this evaluation should inform the review of the quality of the care and influence the training provided for the staff.

- Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

## 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 differences 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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:** Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1EG

**Responsible individual:** Lisa Deane

**Registered manager:** David Sanders

## Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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