

1230725

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children aged between 8 and 17 who may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse. The children may have had a traumatic experience that has left them vulnerable and as a result may find it difficult to manage in society.

The registered manager left the home in June 2019. The manager's post is currently vacant.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 August 2019

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 26 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/08/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home if;</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(3)(d))</p>	21/10/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children to manage long-term conditions and, when necessary, meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition or other complex needs. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.12)

In particular, ensure that all information guiding staff on the management of a child’s specific healthcare needs is collated in a central and easily accessible place.

- 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, request that the responsible local authority conducts a return home interview following each incident of a child going missing.

- Ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children 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)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has settled since the last inspection. The children now live in a safe and nurturing environment in which they receive individualised care and support. All of the children were very positive about their experiences of living at this home. A child said, 'It's the best place that I've been.'

The staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children. The close relationships that the children develop with the staff and each other underpin their ability to resolve day-to-day issues amicably. The children talk to the staff about things that worry them, confident in the knowledge that the staff will listen and, if necessary, help them.

The majority of children make good progress in most areas of their lives. Levels of aggression, incidents of going missing from home and incidents of self-harm have reduced. Children's engagement in education and development of independence skills are increasing. The children are able to easily navigate public transport to see their family and friends at great distances away.

Families and social workers refer to a 'massive difference' and 'complete turnaround' in the children placed. A parent said, 'They've changed [my child]. She is happy and settled. I can't wish for her to be in a better place.'

The children enjoy normal childhood experiences. They love cooking, going to the gym and sleepovers with their friends. One child was delighted to be allowed to bring their cat to live with them.

The staff are aware of the children's health conditions, such as diabetes, and provide appropriate help and support. However, information and guidance for staff is scattered throughout the child's files. There is not a clear central reference point detailing the support that children need. Guidance is therefore sometimes hard to find and changes may not be clearly and effectively communicated.

Recent investment in the building and the garden means that the children now enjoy a much cosier and inviting home than was previously the case. The children have enjoyed taking forward their recycling ideas to create unusual and effective planters in the garden. Geraniums now tumble out of colourfully painted car tyres and strawberry plants out of old milk cartons. Some of the children enjoy the daily task of watering the garden each day and take great pride in the vegetables that they have grown. This means that children have an increased sense of pride in and ownership of their home.

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

The consistent boundaries in place help the children to feel safe and secure. The staff use praise, rewards and discussion to promote positive behaviour. This helps the children to understand the impact that their behaviour has on themselves and others. The staff help the children to talk through their anxieties or concerns. As a result, the children develop greater maturity and are more able to self-regulate. A child said, 'It's great. I've calmed down a lot, helped by the staff.' Children have become better equipped to deal with difficult situations and are better prepared for adult life.

The staff balance well the growing need for personal freedom and independence with individual risk factors. The staff have received suitable training in safeguarding. They are keenly aware that keeping children safe is their core duty. Effective collaborative working arrangements with other agencies, such as the police, promote the children's welfare. The local police liaison officer said, '[The staff] truly care about the children and do so much to try and keep them safe. They're brilliant.'

The staff act as a caring parent would when children fail to return home at an agreed time or go missing from the home. The staff talk to the children about why they go missing. In most cases, the staff have been able to help children to reduce the frequency and associated risks of going missing. The children are safer as a result. However, staff do not consistently liaise effectively with the relevant placing authority to request that a return home interview is conducted after each incident of a child going missing from the home. This means that opportunities to understand patterns and trends or aspects of risk are potentially missed.

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

The registered manager left in June 2019 and the manager's post is currently vacant. The deputy manager has, in the absence of a manager, provided continuity of leadership for staff and children. The service has improved since the last inspection. However, there are particular shortfalls that have been raised both at this inspection and previously.

Staff recruitment procedures are not consistently robust. References are not always sourced from the last employer. Employment dates and qualifications for prospective staff are not scrutinised effectively. Prospective staff's reasons for ceasing previous employment with children and vulnerable adults are not thoroughly explored. These shortfalls mean that gaps in employment history may be missed. This limits the provider's ability to robustly scrutinise the suitability of new staff.

The staff generally maintain records of suitable quality. However, on occasion, some documents are unsigned or lack clarity of information.

The enthusiastic staff work well together. The staff are well supported by each other and the management team. Communication is effective, and the staff have very meaningful relationships with the children.

The staff have high aspirations for the children and are committed to the children's long-term emotional well-being. Partnership working with professionals and families is very effective and promotes the children's well-being. Partner professionals and parents were consistently highly complimentary about the service.

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.

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: 1230725

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: Olubunmi Fabusuyi

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanna Heller, social care inspector

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