

2517433

Registered provider: Pathways Residential Child Care Larkhill House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties. It is owned by a private provider.

This is the first inspection since the home opened in August 2019.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A	N/A	N/A

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff have high expectations for the young people and support them to do well at school. In some cases, young people have not been given a school placement. However, staff provide alternative learning experiences and maintain good routines so that young people have structure and spend their time constructively. Managers challenge local authorities to provide a full-time education for each young person.

The home is introducing a therapeutic model of care. This involves understanding the young people's wider health and social needs. Although this model is not yet fully embedded in staff practice, challenging and damaging behaviours have already reduced.

Young people and staff have good, trusting relationships. Consultation takes place with young people. They have the opportunity to make their choices, wishes and feelings known on a regular basis. The manager writes back to them with outcomes and decisions. This means that young people feel empowered.

Young people need more help to stop smoking. Staff do not make sure that young people have access to the appropriate smoking cessation services.

One young person moved on from this placement without careful and considered planning. This means that this young person was not properly prepared for their move. Managers have recognised this shortfall and taken steps to improve the way that they support young people who need to move at short notice.

The home is generally well decorated and comfortable. However, some areas have not been maintained to a high standard. This detracts from the otherwise homely and welcoming environment.

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

Staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and therefore they know how to keep young people safe.

When young people leave the home without permission or go missing from the home, staff do all that they can to locate them and return them safely. However, when young people return to the home, they do not have an independent return interview. This is a missed opportunity to gather information that could be used to improve the safety of young people.

Behaviour management strategies are generally effective. This means that young people's behaviours improve as they settle into the home. There has been a decrease in the use of restraint. Staff use restraint appropriately when necessary to protect young people. However, restraint records are not always clear. There is not always enough detail to support robust evaluation of restraint practice. Some

records had not been reviewed by the manager. Managers were aware of this shortfall and have taken steps to improve the quality of restraint records.

A system is in place to enable young people to make complaints about their care. The home's complaint form is well designed and child friendly. However, staff could not locate these forms easily. This has the potential to limit young people's ability to raise concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The interim manager, supported by the home's responsible individual, is providing effective management following a period of management change which included the resignation of the previous responsible individual and change to the registered manager. The interim manager has brought stability to the home, introduced some improved systems, and improved staff morale. The staff team is better organised and better able to provide consistent care to young people. The interim manager has ensured that management changes have not impacted negatively on the experiences of young people.

The home has a well-being advisor who visits the home each week. The well-being advisor provides support and advice to staff and this has improved staff's responses to young people's emotional health needs.

Partnership working is good and improving. Effective liaison with placing authorities had resulted in improved placement stability, clear decision-making and a better understanding of risks and responsibilities.

Quality assurance and management monitoring of the home are effective. Areas of potential development are identified and improvements take place. The staff's views are sought and their feedback is acted on. The interim manager has redesigned some management monitoring systems to ensure a clearer focus on continual improvement. Managers are developing a more structured quality assurance system.

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

Recommendations

- As well as longer-term support for children to move on from the home effectively (regulation 9(2(b)(vi))), the home has an important role in supporting each child leaving the home in the period immediately before their departure. The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the Statement of Purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3) This is with particular reference to smoking cessation strategies.
- 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 the 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)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2517433

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathways Residential Child Care Limited

Registered provider address:

Responsible individual: Zillah Wujkiw

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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