

2517433

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

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

There has been no registered manager in post since August 2020, but a manager is now in place and going through the registration process.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 11 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The staff team has not had the skills and experience to sufficiently meet the needs of children with complex care needs. Children have been inappropriately placed. As such, the duration of children's placements has been short. Their progress has been disrupted. However, the current manager brings much needed stability and a more measured approach to admissions.

The interior of the home has improved. This now feels homely and inviting. However, the communal areas do not have many photos of children and there are some areas of improvement required to further personalise the home.

Staff encourage children who are not in school to continue their learning. They have structure to their day. This includes a mixture of practical learning and education-based activities. Children have excelled by making a power-point presentation about key areas of their life.

The home benefits from its own therapist. They provide therapy for children and advice and support to the staff team. This recent development is to be expanded and further established within the home.

Staff understand the cultural care needs of children. The home's diverse workforce provides practical help and advice, as well as access to services to meet the children's individual needs.

The safety of children

Leaders and managers have admitted children to the home when their complex care needs could not be met. The home has failed to employ experienced and skilled staff. Children's placements, therefore, are not effective in stabilising their needs.

However, improvements have been made in the matching of children accommodated at this home. This has meant a recent significant reduction in the number of incidents of children going missing and the number of physical interventions.

Children's behaviour management plans do not give sufficient detail about risk. This means that managers do not have enough evidence to make judgements about the effectiveness of staff's actions and interventions.

Children share views about their care. They now do this in a variety of ways, including using feedback forms. Children have access to the complaints procedure, which is available within the home.

Staff have improved access to training and development opportunities. During the COVID-19 outbreak, this has continued in a variety of formats. This ensures staff now have the skills and knowledge to meet the children's needs.

Leaders and managers

This team is not yet established. There has been a large staff turnover, as well as inconsistent management. However, the current manager brings experience and is well supported by a deputy manager and an experienced responsible individual. They have developed a plan to address significant failings. This includes structured training and the employment of a therapist.

Managers have not ensured there is an effective internal mechanism to monitor progress. This means managers fail to identify ineffective practice and evidence continuous improvements.

Managers have considered the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. They quickly produced a detailed plan to ensure safe working practice for children, staff and visitors. Staff clearly understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

Staff now benefit from improved leadership. They say they feel supported by managers. They are provided with training to ensure children's needs are better met. Managers provide regular supervision to staff.

Three recommendations from the last inspection have been met. On this assurance visit, two requirements and two recommendations have been made.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>	04/12/2020

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p>	<p>04/12/2020</p>

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day to day basis. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations including the quality standards page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should monitor and review the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able understand and where possible, address any negative trends. (Guide to Children's homes regulations including the quality standards page 44, paragraph 10.19)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2517433

Registered provider: Pathways Residential Child Care Limited

Registered provider address: 45 Burton Road, Branston, Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 3DL

Responsible individual: James McCabe

Registered manager: Position vacant

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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