

2517433

Pathways Residential Child Care Limited

Monitoring visit

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 who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned by a private provider.

There has been no registered manager in post since August 2020.

Inspection date: 23 and 24 February 2021

This monitoring visit

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 (coronavirus) is currently posing to those we regulate. During this monitoring inspection, the inspector took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 by the home.

The monitoring of this home went ahead remotely. Information to inform the monitoring process was obtained through conversations with the manager and staff and through reviewing a range of documents.

This monitoring visit was carried out to assess whether staff have the necessary skills and expertise to meet the needs of children in their care and to determine whether the children who live together can do so safely. There were concerns relating to poor management, restraint practice, behaviour management and frequent incidents in which children were going missing from the home. Children's documents were to be reviewed to determine whether children were making progress.

Children frequently go missing from the home. Although staff look for children, and there are strategies to prevent missing episodes, these are ineffective. Children encourage each other to leave the home, and one child only started going missing after moving into this home. When missing, the children are at risk. One child is known to accept lifts from strangers, and all children are vulnerable to exploitation.

Children have normalised going missing from the home in the evening.

Children can present harmful behaviours towards one another; this has led to children being hurt. Staff try to intervene to keep children safe, but this is not working.

Staff have not built the trusting, stable relationships with children that are necessary to ensure safe care. Children do not trust staff enough to disclose when they are experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties. For example, children do not feel able to tell staff when they feel the need to self-harm. Children's sleep patterns are disturbed because their emotional and mental health needs are not addressed effectively.

Children and birth families have raised concerns about unsafe restraint practice. Children have alleged that inappropriate restraints are used. Physical intervention records show that when children have needed more nurture and empathy, staff have responded in an overly consequential way. This has led to situations escalating unnecessarily. Lessons learned from physical interventions have not been well understood or implemented.

Staff have been unable to successfully set and enforce clear boundaries. This is in part due to the lack of relationships between staff and children. The inability of staff to enforce behaviour management expectations means that the home often feels chaotic. Staff do not manage group dynamics effectively and do not provide enough structure to ensure that children make constructive use of their time. The lack of structure also contributes to the fact that children who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation regularly leave the home without permission or go missing.

There has not been enough curiosity from staff about children's mental health and how this corresponds to each child's behaviour. Although staff have made efforts to meet children's health needs, children have not felt listened to or that their needs have been understood. Although some steps have been taken by staff to ease children's anxieties, these interventions have not gone far enough.

Leaders and managers have not established a culture in the home in which children make progress. Although there have been positive staffing changes, leaders have not ensured that staff can consistently manage children's behaviours. Consequently, children do not always feel safe. Children have not experienced a calm, stable home. Placement endings are not always well planned.

When staff try to engage children in conversations about their behaviour, the children do not engage, so these sessions are ineffective. There is little evidence of meaningful relationships between children and staff.

Although training has been made available to staff, this is not suitably tailored to the needs of the children. For example, many of the staff team members had not received training in how to respond to children who go missing from care. This is

despite the children frequently going missing from care.

There is not a clear understanding of why the current group of children is not making good progress. There is not a clear plan in place to address the current weaknesses or bring about sustained improvement.

Staff are providing home schooling and long-distance school transport, which demonstrates commitment. However, children are not thriving in education because they are awake during the night-time and asleep during the daytime. This means that children are not able to engage well in learning. One child does not have an education placement. However, steps are being taken to address this.

Although the responsible individual has made efforts to recruit, there has been no registered manager in post since August 2020.

There has been a pattern of management instability and poor management practice in the home. There has been an inability of management to sustain good-quality care, structure and safety for children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2020	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
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being.</p> <p>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children being unable to confide in staff when they are struggling with their health. More curiosity is needed about children's mental health needs and how these relate to their presenting behaviours. Staff should better monitor and evaluate the eating habits and overall well-being of children.</p>	18 April 2021

<p>*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(vi)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children frequently going missing, children being verbally and physically aggressive towards one another, concerns relating to unsafe restraint practice and ineffective behaviour management.</p>	<p>18 April 2021</p>
<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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care</p>	<p>18 April 2021</p>

<p>to each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children not having meaningful relationships with staff, behaviour management being ineffective, risk assessments not evaluating children's progress and training not meeting each child's needs.</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.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to children needing planned endings so that wider professionals can be given enough time to plan appropriately in accordance with each child's needs. Where</p>	<p>18 April 2021</p>

<p>the relationships between children are poor, action should be taken to address the situation to prevent escalation. Children should only be admitted to the home if staff are able to meet each child's needs and presenting behaviours.</p>	
<p>Appointment of manager</p> <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—</p> <p>the name of the person so appointed; and</p> <p>the date on which the appointment takes effect.</p> <p>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the responsible individual needing to recruit a committed, experienced registered manager.</p>	<p>18 April 2021</p>

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should endeavour to promote routines for children where they are asleep at night-time and awake in the daytime. This current poor routine is negatively affecting each child's educational attainment and attendance.
(‘Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2517433

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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