

# 1241897

Registered provider: Pathways Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides a full-time treatment programme, over 12 to 15 months, for children who have traumatic backgrounds, behavioural or mental health difficulties and/or have experienced, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation.

There has been no registered manager since 18 May 2021. A manager is now in post and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

### Inspection dates: 22 and 23 July 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 19 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2020	Full	Good
11/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

There are currently four children living at the home. Two children have moved into the home and two have moved out since the last inspection.

Managers undertake impact risk assessments before children move into the home. The assessments have not considered the location of the home or fully evaluated the impact of group dynamics. Therefore, managers have not properly considered how risks could be fully mitigated. Consequently, staff's focus and attention on managing one child's significant needs has, at times, led to a lack of consistent focus of care for the other children living at the home. During the inspection, managers recognised this shortfall and put systems in place to ensure that all children feel equally supported.

The staff do not have a good understanding of how to develop children's independence and life skills. One child is approaching 18 years old and he does not have an independence plan with measurable targets. This means that staff and managers cannot fully support social workers to make critical planning decisions about the child's capacity and future transition plans.

The home is modern with good-quality furniture. However, there is a lack of personalisation in some of the rooms and hallways. This gives a clinical feel to the home and does not support a warm, nurturing family atmosphere for children.

Children maintain appropriate contact with their families. However, some families have expressed that they are not always communicated with promptly or asked for their views. This means that opportunities to problem-solve and seek out additional support for children may have been missed.

Staff understand the importance of education. They are sensitive to the barriers to learning for some of the children and actively promote alternative positive activities and learning opportunities. Therefore, children are making some progress in their learning despite not all being engaged in formal education.

Children are encouraged to attend their health appointments. Staff are working with healthcare professionals to ensure that the children's physical and mental health needs are met.

Staff encourage the children to express their wishes and feelings. The staff offer regular opportunities for children to participate in decisions about activities and the running of the home. This has enabled the children to develop trusting relationships with the staff.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Staff have struggled to manage one child's significant self-harming behaviours. This has led to the increased use of physical restraints and police support to keep the child safe. When staff have written up these incidents, they have failed to consistently record all the required information. Some records do not say whether the child or the staff had a debrief. Not all records detail the type of restraint that was used and how effective it was. Therefore, it is not clear whether the child and staff are given the opportunity to reflect on their actions and consider how they could have behaved differently. In addition, staff do not consistently sign the incident records, which limits their accountability.

Children's risk assessments are broken down into separate risks and plans. This has led to some conflicting guidance and some information being omitted. In a risk assessment for one child, it says the use of humour is a preferred distraction technique. However, in another plan for the same child, it says not to use humour as this can increase risks. For another child, staff identify potential criminal exploitation and violence as risk factors. However, this is not addressed in a risk assessment or support plan. These gaps and lack of coherent guidance mean that the staff do not have a clear set of strategies on how to keep the children safe.

A minority of the staff have not undertaken specialist training to meet some of the children's individual needs. This means that these staff may not be equipped to respond as effectively to the children's behaviours.

Key-work sessions are of poor quality. They do not focus on the children's identified risks or provide them with opportunities to explore different ways of thinking or practise positive behaviours. Therefore, children are not able to understand the risks that some of their behaviours pose and how they can keep themselves safe.

Staff are confident in following safeguarding procedures and understand the home's whistle-blowing policy. When allegations are made, the manager's response is effective and safeguarding referrals are timely. This enables an inclusive multi-agency response to keeping children safe and promotes children's well-being.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been high staff turnover and a short period when there has not been a manager in post. The responsible individual and staff from a nearby sister home have provided support. However, this has meant a lack of management organisation and insufficient scrutiny of the care that children receive. For example, there has been no management oversight of the staff's use of consequences or evaluation of their effectiveness in promoting positive behaviours.

The children's records are not always up to date and are not signed by staff. This lack of detail in record-keeping means that the staff may not have access to

important information and are less likely to be able to provide consistent responses to changes in children's behaviours. In addition, unsigned records make it difficult for the manager to confirm the accuracy and timeliness of what has been written.

Managers have undertaken an internal care review, which is captured in a written report. However, they have failed to consider the strengths and areas of development of the home and how these can inform an action plan for service improvement. Therefore, this limits the report's usefulness as a performance management tool.

Supervision provides the staff with the opportunity to discuss the challenges of managing some of the children's complex needs. Staff say that they value this time. However, there have been periods when staff have not had supervision regularly enough. This means that staff may not always have had access to the support and guidance that they need.

Managers have undertaken timely responses to complaints. They have provided a summary of their actions and outcomes. This promotes learning opportunities to inform future practice.

A new manager is now in post, who has started to review all aspects of the service. Together with the responsible individual, he recognises the identified shortfalls and has begun to make thoughtful changes to the practice at the home. The staff and the children welcome the positive changes that they can see happening.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff have a clear understanding of and plan for developing children's independence skills.</p>	21 September 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>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p>	21 September 2021

<p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This relates to ensuring that all staff have training in understanding and implementing each child's risk assessment, and their role in keeping children safe.</p>	
<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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that risk assessments are up to date, address all the children's risks, are concise and include clear information on behaviour management strategies and techniques to reduce risk.</p>	21 September 2021
<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> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))</p>	21 September 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with the appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	21 September 2021

This refers specifically to ensuring that all staff receive regular supervision in line with the home's supervision policy.	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	21 September 2021
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))</p>	21 September 2021

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that the home feels warm, welcoming and homely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that managers work closely with the placing authority to understand the child's relationship history and the impact that the child's arrival may have on the group already living at the home. In particular, the manager should consider staff's skills and knowledge and the location of the home in meeting the child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.3)



- The registered person should identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the care provided, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery at the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

## **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:** 1241897

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Pathways Care Group

**Registered provider address:** Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor SL4 1EG

**Responsible individual:** Olubunmi Fabusuyi

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

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