

1230725

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 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 they may find it difficult to manage in society.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered with Ofsted in 2019.

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: 8 to 9 September 2021

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 good

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

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/08/2019	Full	Good
26/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home's therapeutic model of care is fully embedded into staff practice. Staff develop positive relationships with children in a short space of time. Children trust the staff and can talk to them about their experiences and feelings. Children can make use of weekly therapy sessions and are supported to access community-based emotional well-being services when appropriate. Children said that the staff are the best bit about living at the home. The bonds created mean that children know that there is always someone there for them and to look out for them.

Children receive individualised care and support at this stable, nurturing home. They feel consulted on about all aspects of their lives and that staff care about their well-being and prospects. Children enjoy planning activities and are encouraged and supported to voice their thoughts about their future goals and plans. This level of involvement gives them a sense of pride and personal ownership. Parents and professionals can see from the nurturing interactions between staff and children that the staff really care.

The home's photo collection of shared memorable moments during the COVID-19 pandemic has been collected into a 'lockdown love' photo album. This includes photos of trips to the beach to go crabbing, themed meals, party and pamper nights, birthdays and creative activities, such as making planters for the garden from deck boards. One child has been particularly successful in kick-boxing; a new activity that they have recently taken up. Staff and the child were very proud when the child was recently awarded their red belt.

The manager ensures that she understands and can meet a child's needs before they move into the home. The manager carefully matches children well with the existing group and with staff skills and experience. Any additional needs, such as managing epilepsy, are well catered for, with staff undertaking additional relevant training. As a result, it is rare for a child to move on in an unplanned way. On one occasion when this did occur, the organisation supported the child in a bespoke provision with familiar staff. This enabled the placing local authority to source an appropriate home for the child and reduce the risk of further unplanned endings.

The staff ensure that the building is homely and well decorated. Children are rightly proud of their home. They enjoy decorating their bedrooms in their own personal style.

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

Effective help and protection are at the core of all practice at the home. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, including understanding and managing exploitation and county lines and preventing radicalisation. Staff are clear on how and to whom they should raise any safeguarding concerns. The manager ensures

that there is a comprehensive response to any disclosures or safeguarding incidents.

Staff understand the individual risks for the children and work hard in partnership with them and other agencies to reduce these risks. Due to the positive support that children receive from the staff, the frequency of incidents of children going missing from the home and risks of exploitation reduce. For some children, this has meant that the courts have been able to remove deprivation of liberty orders that were previously in place.

The consistent but flexible boundaries help children to feel safe. Staff are skilled at keeping calm and de-escalating situations. They use the minimum levels of intervention required and understand the thresholds for physical and environmental restraint. Children said that they always feel safe and well protected. The positive relationships between children and staff are a strong protective factor which help keep children safe.

Staff encourage positive behaviour through reflective discussion and praise and reward systems. Sanctions are used infrequently and financial reparation is used only as a response to property damage. On occasion, these financial reparations are not recorded sufficiently clearly and it is difficult to understand how much the child has contributed towards the repair.

Children are involved in the development of their support plans, which helps them begin to better understand risk. They develop individual journey planners when initially allowed unsupervised free time. However, one child's missing-from-home risk assessment guidance lacks clarity for staff on when the child should be deemed as being missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has high expectations of her staff and provides good-quality leadership. The manager and staff work well in partnership with parents and professionals. The manager is an effective advocate for children and challenges partner agencies when she feels that decisions are not being made in a child's best interests.

Staff are very positive about working at the home and refer to the manager as 'exemplary'. Staff consistently feel well supported by the manager and deputy manager, who work well as a team. Effective staff induction, supervision and support ensure that new staff gain suitable skills and confidence and are well supported to understand the therapeutic ethos of the home.

The manager keeps staff training needs under review to reflect new or changing needs of the children. The comprehensive menu of online training is supplemented with relevant face-to-face training in specific areas. This ensures that staff remain up to date in their skills and knowledge.

Record-keeping, on occasion, does not always provide the required clarity in relation to sanctions and missing-from-home guidance. Staff vetting processes are suitably robust but, on occasions, lack attention to detail. Staff qualifications are not always recorded as seen and verified.

The manager's review of the quality of care at the home has not considered how the home can continue to grow and develop. Therefore, opportunities for reflection and to drive improvement are potentially lost.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that, as set out in regulations 31–33, they maintain good employment practice. In particular, ensure that copies of relevant qualifications are held on staff recruitment files. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording of financial sanctions. In addition, ensure that each child's missing-from-home risk assessment and protocols provide clarity as to when the child is to be defined as missing. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1230725

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: Sarah Whitland

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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