

1185828

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022. He also manages another setting.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 February 2026

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: 19 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2024	Full	Good
19/03/2024	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
01/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home and spent time with the inspectors. They have lived together for some time, and have formed positive, respectful relationships with each other. Children enjoy trusting relationships with staff, and a shared sense of fun contributes to the home's positive atmosphere. Children experience stability and are enabled to develop a sense of permanence and belonging.

Children enjoy a variety of activities together and individually with staff. This includes sightseeing in London and a caravan holiday. These experiences help children to develop confidence and have fun. Photos of special occasions are captured, displayed in the home and kept in memory books. This supports children to feel valued and secure.

Children attend school regularly. Managers and staff work closely with education professionals to support children through any challenges they may experience. Staff have supported one child with their move to high school. The transition was initially difficult; however, a collaborative approach between home and school has helped the child to settle in well. Staff complete focussed work with children to support their educational progress and their achievements are celebrated.

Children spend regular time with family members and friends. Staff support this time and ensure that arrangements are safe. Staff recognise that changes to family time can affect children's emotional wellbeing. When changes are made, staff respond sensitively and provide children with alternative, meaningful activities. Staff help children to understand their family dynamics and develop their sense of identity.

Children are supported to attend routine health appointments. Staff understand children's emotional health needs. An in-house therapist spends time in the home and is available to children when they require specialist support.

Children live in a comfortable, well-maintained environment. The home is nicely decorated and has a warm, family feel. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual tastes and staff encourage children to keep their bedrooms tidy.

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

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Children do not go missing from home, are not at risk of exploitation and have not needed to be held to keep them safe. Staff are equipped with the skills they need to keep children safe should these risks arise.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. Risks in relation to self-harm for one child are known by staff. There are very few incidents of concern. The child talks to staff about their feelings, and they

respond thoughtfully and with care. Staff take appropriate action to ensure the child's safety. However, the written plan does not reflect all the strategies that staff are using to keep the child safe. This shortfall means that agency staff, who occasionally work in the home, may not understand how the child needs to be supported.

Staff support children with good-quality, individualised direct work. Children benefit from strength based, child centred key work sessions that focus on issues affecting them. Staff are confident in talking to children about sensitive matters, including self-harm, bullying and puberty. This helps children to feel emotionally safe.

Positive behaviour is promoted by staff. Staff implement clear boundaries, routines and structure. Reward charts help children to understand what is expected of them. Children are supported to budget their money, cook, and keep their bedrooms tidy. This helps children to develop their independence skills.

Since the last inspection, some new staff are working at the home. Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment practices. This ensures that only suitable adults are employed to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a confident and experienced manager. He knows the children well and has a visible presence in the home. The manager is ambitious for the children and their progression is his priority. Staff say that they are supported by leaders and managers, who recognise the importance of staff wellbeing when caring for children.

Team meetings take place every month and are well attended. They are a forum to share detailed information about children and to reflect on their progress. Managers value staff views about how children need to be supported. Actions are set and shared across the team, which creates a sense of shared ownership about how the home operates.

Supervision takes place regularly and is used to consider children's needs and reflect on staff practice. Staff receive an annual appraisal of their performance. Staff say that they benefit from the training they receive. Consequently, they have the skills and confidence to fulfil their roles. They implement learning from training in their daily care of children.

The manager has good oversight of the home, and the work staff do with children. Monthly audits help to monitor children's progress and the quality of care they receive. This ensures that managers and staff are striving to provide the best care for the children.

Family members recognise the progress children make and attribute this to the quality of care that they receive from managers and staff. However, the views of family members are not regularly sought. This is a missed opportunity to make further improvements to the home.

External professionals say that the manager and staff communicate regularly and effectively with them. They speak highly of the home, and the progress children make. One professional said, '[Name of child] has made progress in terms of confidence and expressing their views. They are included; it's like a family. I wouldn't wish for them to live anywhere else.'

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— 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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(vi)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that risk assessments contain clear steps for staff to follow should concerns about self-harm arise.	07 April 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek feedback from family members and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 1185828

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Ltd

Registered provider address: 146 Bolton Road, Atherton, Manchester M46 9LF

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: Andrew Funnell

Inspectors

Anna Belshaw, Social Care Inspector

Julia Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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