

1250196

Registered provider: First 4 Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company. It provides care and support for up to two children who have a learning disability. The home is committed to providing care to children on a long-, medium- and short-term basis, depending on the needs of the child.

The deputy manager is currently acting as manager until the newly appointed manager is in post.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 28 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2020	Full	Good
02/10/2018	Full	Good
06/03/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptionally high-quality care based on their individual needs. They experience a homely and warm environment, characterised by a diverse staff team that is highly motivated to ensure the children achieve optimum outcomes relative to their learning disabilities.

The communication and consistent language used and routines in place have really helped children to settle into the home. This helps children to make significant and sustained progress in areas such as self-care and independence, and in their ability to regulate emotions.

Children attend education that is tailored to their complex learning needs. One child has excelled and enjoyed their education and is now attending sixth form. Leaders and managers have shown drive and resilience, and have advocated strongly and challenged appropriately when children's education has been disrupted. They clearly have the children's best interests at the forefront and look for creative solutions when faced with challenge.

Health needs are met, and staff receive training in specific conditions and disabilities such as advanced autism. The emotional well-being and physical health needs of all the children are clearly understood by the manager and staff. The impact of change in all areas of the child's life is implicit in the behaviour support plan, and staff are intuitive in their responses. Risk assessments are relevant and up to date, with clear actions in place. This ensures continuity of care.

The admission of one child and discharge of another were well planned and tailored to their individual needs. All relevant information was ascertained prior to admission and discharge, and there was consultation with parents and professionals to ensure that children experienced a smooth and seamless transition. This reduced unnecessary stress for the children.

Before one child moved into the home, the child already living at the home was shown photographs of the child, which established some familiarity and preparation. There is a children's guide that is made up of visual aids that children with a high level of learning needs can refer to with staff support. One child has moved with staff from the home into adult care. This attention to detail provides reassurance and consistency of care and support.

Consultation and participation with children are creative and child centred. This is achieved through a variety of approaches, such as interactive children's meetings and key working. A photograph album is being compiled which will cement positive

memories for the child of visits to the wildlife park and sensory fun fair. Other activities enjoyed by children include baking and arts and crafts.

Parents are very much a part of their children's day-to-day lives. This provides parents with much reassurance and confidence in the care afforded to their children.

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

The risks and vulnerabilities of each child are known, managed and responded to exceptionally well. Parental consent is sought whenever there is a need to deprive children of certain liberties, such as the locking of the external door to safeguard one child.

Children know they are safe and feel safe. Work undertaken with the children in keeping themselves safe is continuous. Specialised services are identified and referred to dependant on the needs of the children. Much thought and discussion has taken place in respect of one child having walking restraints and a harness fitted in the car.

Staff work proactively with other agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, school and the social workers, in protecting the children. The risks associated with children with learning needs and disabilities are individualised and well-documented, and this underpins staff practice.

Safe recruitment practice is in place. New staff are appropriately vetted, and this means that children are cared for by individuals that are suitable and safe.

Feedback from parents and professionals was very positive. Parents highlighted that staff understood their children's worlds. This brought comfort and reassurance to parents.

Inspectors observed first-hand the respectful working rapport that staff have established with parents. A parent was observed to be at ease in the home. The manager commented: 'This is her son's home. It is our priority to make her feel at home too.' This results in children being comforted by carers and parents working in harmony.

Inspectors heard positive accounts from the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) of one child. The IRO stated that there was clear progress for the child since moving to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has undergone a period of having no registered manager, and it has experienced some staff changes. Leaders have taken steps to recruit both a manager and staff. An acting manager, supported by the area manager, has provided stability, and a new manager has been appointed and is due to start in

January 2022. Staff are inspirational and motivated; they provide consistency of care, which enables children to thrive.

The ethos of the home is very much based on family values. The children are consulted, relative to their learning disabilities, on all aspects of their lives and on decisions about their home.

Leaders and managers create a culture of learning, and they have high but realistic expectations of the staff team. Performance issues are addressed promptly, and actions are put in place to support staff through this process. However, staff have not benefited from a formal appraisal of their practice, and there are gaps in supervision for some staff. This may mean that any issues or concerns may go unnoticed.

Good-quality recording and monitoring systems are in place, which underpins the high-quality care of the children. In recognition of children's learning styles, staff do not always record key work sessions in a way that children are able to refer back to.

The children's vulnerabilities and learning needs are known, and close partnership working ensures the children achieve to their fullest potential. Leaders and managers appropriately challenge professionals when decisions are made that are not seen to be in the children's best interests.

Due to the change in management, there has been a lack of oversight in ensuring that the quality of care review has been submitted to Ofsted. This does not help the regulator to evaluate the care and experiences of children living at the home.

The home is warm, welcoming and well maintained. There are plenty of resources such as books, arts and crafts for children to engage with. The manager and staff do not always ensure that the home is hazard free so that children can safely enjoy freedom of movement in all areas of their home.

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

Recommendations

- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history and development. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and be reminded of behaviour that promotes learning and independence, according to their age and understanding. Staff should ensure that key working sessions are recorded and communicated in a way that children can refer back on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The processes the registered person puts in place to enable such a review of the quality of care (regulation 45) to take place should allow for a report to be generated at least once every six months. The generated report should be sent to Ofsted and the placing local authority of all children in the home who are children looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, the manager must ensure that they are hazard free and are, in most cases, homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations, such as the safe storage of fire extinguishers. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 1250196

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: First 4 Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 16 St. Wilfrids Road, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 6AA

Responsible individual: Carolann Dodds

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector
Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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