

1254555

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a small private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 November 2017

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: first inspection

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The majority of young people make good progress from their starting points. They are attending school regularly and achieving above their targets, especially in the subject of English.
- Management arrangements are effective and ensure that young people receive

a good quality of care.

- Young people thoroughly enjoy all the activities on offer, including swimming and singing lessons.
- Young people's views and rights are very much a part of home life. They are listened to and their views are championed.
- The staff work very well with partner agencies to meet the needs of young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people do not always attend their health appointments that are necessary to ensure good health and well-being.
- Communication and recording systems are improving, but staff signatures in the handover book are not always evident to show that they have completed the tasks.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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First inspection		
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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
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, the registered person should ensure that children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)) In particular, that young people attend their necessary health appointments.	29/11/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive good-quality care that focuses on their individual needs. This is supported by detailed care planning with partner agencies. A social worker commented, 'I chose this placement. They are doing a good job; what the staff see as small steps being made with [name of young person], these are massive achievements – the staff need to know that.'

The majority of young people are making good progress in all aspects of their development since coming to live here. A young person is excelling in school and attaining grades way above her age in the subject of English. Young people also enjoy a range of recreational activities, including singing lessons, swimming, visits to cartoon conventions and Halloween parties with friends. These are new and positive experiences that will enable the young people to grow in confidence.

Young people's health needs are generally very well met by the staff. They work closely with social workers and mental health workers through regular meetings to plan how best to help young people. However, a young person is refusing to attend appointments. This is being addressed by all professionals involved in the care plan. Due to the lack of attendance, a clear idea of this young person's health and well-being outcomes cannot be confirmed. Other young people enjoy very good health. An in-house trained therapist provides direct therapy to young people and guidance to the staff. All staff have a first aid qualification.

The staff continue to encourage young people to make healthy choices through key-work sessions about sexual health matters, nutrition, feelings and emotions. Young people's self-care skills are much improved and they are taking pride in their appearance. These examples demonstrate their growing confidence and self-worth. Medication systems have recently been reviewed and two staff now sign the records to guard against errors occurring.

Young people understand their rights. They know how to make a complaint through an easily accessible and child-focused procedure. This is displayed clearly in the home. Moreover, they have weekly meetings in which they can raise their views and opinions on issues such as activities, new household items and holidays that they would like to go on. They also have regular visits from an advocate who educates them in their entitlements. An advocate said, 'I have no issues here; they are transparent, open and welcoming.' These practices enable young people to have a real say in their daily lives.

Young people have positive relationships with the staff and identify particular staff that they like and feel comfortable with. Young people new to the home continue to develop these relationships and build trust. The staff place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their care practice, irrespective of the very challenging behaviour presented. A young person commented, 'I would give this home nine out of 10.'

Young people are treated with dignity, and their family history and ethnicity are promoted. They have regular contact with their brothers and sisters, and friends come to visit. Young people all live near to their home town, which helps to facilitate this. The staff also receive equality and diversity training and have a good understanding of the challenges that young people living in care may encounter. Memory books are being collated so that young people can look back positively on their care journey and experience.

Young people who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively. Detailed care planning involving young people and partner agencies supports this. A social worker commented, 'I did a lot of work to plan the placement with the staff to make sure it was right.' A welcome pack is also provided to young people and it clearly explains the running of the home and their rights and responsibilities.

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

The staff work effectively with partner agencies to help identify, monitor, measure and reduce risks with young people. Detailed risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed and agreed by the social worker for their continued benefit. For example, a young person's aggressive behaviour is much improved, so much so that staffing levels have been reduced.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from home. However, protocols with partner agencies are in place should this happen. Self-harm incidents are managed in line with guidance from the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Regular professionals' meetings take place to help minimise the risks within

the protective network of professionals. Additionally, the manager analyses each incident to highlight any triggers and trends to help prevent further occurrences.

The staff have regular training in safeguarding and from discussion with them they have a good understanding of how to protect young people. Organisational policies and procedures are in place to guide staff practice. These measures complement the culture of safety in the home.

The staff and young people are clear about acceptable standards of behaviour and young people generally accept this. They receive incentives to encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to make positive choices. Sanctions are also fair and restorative in nature. Physical interventions are rarely used; on seven occasions since the home opened in April 2017. These are reviewed by the acting manager to ensure that the restraints are appropriate.

The staff are recruited and selected through a process that takes account of safer recruitment practice to promote the safety of young people. This includes checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and references from previous employers to guard against unsafe adults working at the home.

The physical environment of the home is safe and secure and protects young people from hazards. This is accompanied by health and safety risk assessments and routine maintenance checks. Furthermore, a fire risk assessment and evacuation plans are in place to safely guide young people in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home was registered in April 2017. The registered manager left in June 2017 and a new manager is in position and is awaiting registration from Ofsted. He is suitably qualified and has a wealth of experience in working with young people who have emotional and behavioural needs. He is enthusiastic and passionate about providing a high standard of care and experience to young people. He is supported by two deputy managers.

There are effective relationships between staff and partner agencies to ensure the best support for young people. The manager, in particular, advocates and challenges partner agencies to gain the right support and services for young people. For example, he escalates young people's need for specialist mental health services.

A development plan is in place. This is improving identified weaknesses in practice. For example, a handover book and telephone contact log have been implemented to enhance information sharing between the staff and professionals. An effective system is in place to notify all appropriate bodies of serious incidents to ensure that information is shared to safeguard young people.

External monitoring systems are good and provide an independent report of the quality of care and safety of young people. The manager promptly addresses any areas for

improvement. Additionally, the manager's quality review highlights areas for continued improvement and sets the future direction of the home.

The staff who spoke to the inspector said that they enjoy their work and are complimentary of the acting manager. They have guidance, policies and procedures to support their care practice. They also confirm that they have regular supervisions, team meetings and training to further ensure their competence in delivering quality care to young people.

The manager ensures that the home is maintained to a good standard and that it looks and feels like a family home. A young person commented, 'I am happy here.' Additionally, it is spacious to allow young people privacy away from others. Each young person's bedroom is personal to them and reflects their interests.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1254555

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life

Registered provider address: Next Stage, 28 Manchester Road, Westhoughton, Bolton BL5 3QJ

Responsible individual: Richard Guy

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Caroline Jones, social care inspector

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