

1254555

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. The home can provide care for up to two children who may be experiencing social and emotional issues.

The home registered with Ofsted in April 2017 and the manager was registered in July 2022.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 August 2024

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: 31 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2023	Full	Good
08/03/2023	Full	Good
05/05/2021	Full	Good
12/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home and another child has moved in.

Managers and staff support children when they move out of the home. They listen to children and work with them to create a plan which enables children to take ownership of their move. Managers ensure that children moving into the home and the children already living in the home are suitable to live together. Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively by the staff team.

Children are encouraged to visit before moving in, and one child who could not wait to move in was supported to move in three days ahead of schedule.

Staff place the well-being of the children at the centre of their practice. They are nurturing and warm and genuinely care for children. Children's achievements are celebrated and rewarded appropriately. Children are treated with dignity and respect, and measures are in place to ensure that their privacy is respected. Children understand that should staff need to interrupt free time or personal space, it is only done to ensure that they are safe.

Children's wishes and feelings about their time with family are taken into account, and staff work to ensure family time is safe for children. This time is supported by staff, who work proactively and positively to ensure that the time spent with family members is meaningful. Recently, staff supported a child's grandmother to go with them to a cheerleading competition.

Children are doing well in school and excelling in their educational targets. Staff are ambitious for children and support them to attend school. One child has recently made the decision to change schools, with the manager supporting them to do this. Managers and staff have effective communication with schools and the headteacher of the virtual school. When it has not been possible for a child to attend school, the manager used a community library, and support from the school, to make sure the child did not miss out on education.

The children are in good health physically and they attend all routine appointments. Staff are supported by the in-house therapist, who offers guidance and advice, enabling them to support the children's emotional needs. When prescribed medications are needed, these are administered and documented appropriately and stored correctly.

Children have built trusted relationships with staff. They know how to make a complaint and talk to staff when they are not happy. Children use key-work sessions to say how they feel and what they want to do.

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

Children say that they feel safe. They can identify a trusted member of staff who they can talk to about any concerns. Children seek out staff when they need adult support, and staff respond promptly and sensitively. Staff are not afraid to have difficult and challenging conversations with children. Staff support children to understand risks and how to keep themselves safe.

Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding. Safeguarding themes are further explored in staff supervisions. Staff support children to take risks appropriate to their age or level of understanding. Staff have a good understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities posed to children, such as bullying, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, and are supported to manage these risks with clear, detailed risk assessments.

When children go missing from home, they experience a well-coordinated response, to reduce the actual risk of harm and help them to return home safely. Although no specific training is carried out, there are clear and comprehensive guidelines and plans in place for staff to follow. They understand what needs to be done and who to contact in the event of a child going missing from home.

Children are not physically restrained. Positive behaviour is constantly promoted. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and are creative with positive reward schemes that are specific to the needs of each child.

Staff are proactive in supporting children when they feel overwhelmed by their feelings. They communicate well with children and support them to safely manage their behaviour and any difficult feelings they have. Children are encouraged to learn from incidents when things do not go to plan and they are helped with how to deal with things differently in the future.

Support plans and risk assessments are detailed documents which are regularly updated. They include clear information and guidance for staff to follow to ensure that the care provided is consistent. Plans are child-centred and include the child's voice.

Safe recruitment processes are in place to ensure that the right staff are employed to keep the children safe. Agency staff are used occasionally, but the same staff are used to ensure consistency and minimal disruption for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a permanent suitably experienced manager. The manager is supported by a newly appointed deputy manager. They know the children well and lead the staff in supporting the children's progress and overall well-being.

The manager ensures that all health and safety checks are completed. The manager ensures that people coming to the home to carry out safety checks or attending to maintenance issues are suitably checked and have the necessary skills and experience.

Managers and leaders make child-centred decisions about children coming to live at the home and ensure that staff have the skills to meet their needs at the time they move in. Managers ensure that plans for individual children identify their needs, and challenge the local authority when documents do not contain up-to-date personal details.

The manager ensures that the home is maintained to a high standard. Children are part of discussions about decorating their bedrooms and the rest of the house. The house looks like a family home and there are photos, paintings and personal items belonging to the children around the home. One child has started to grow vegetables in the garden and takes pride in this.

Staff receive effective support and challenge through supervision and appraisals. These are child-focused and practice related. Children now share their views on individual staff as part of the appraisal process.

Team meetings are held monthly. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of the records of these meetings. The meeting notes are handwritten and vary depending on who has made the notes. Some of the notes are illegible. Additionally, the meetings are not reflective in considering children's needs. This is a missed opportunity to reflect on practice as a team and for staff to learn from each other.

The manager ensures that staff complete all required training and do shadow shifts before starting work in the home. The management team encourages staff in their professional growth and the staff feel supported in their development. Staff work as a team and say they enjoy working in the home.

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, The 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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are offered opportunities in team meetings to consider research and its application to practice.	30 October 2024

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: 1254555

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

Registered provider address: Regency House, 45-53 Chorley New Road, Bolton
BL1 4QR

Responsible individual: Richard Guy

Registered manager: Maria Hope

Inspector

Nicola Jeffery, Social Care Inspector

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