

1254555

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life Ltd

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

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

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 July 2025

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: 14 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/08/2024	Full	Good
31/10/2023	Full	Good
08/03/2023	Full	Good
05/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making progress relative to their individual starting points. The pace of progress varies, influenced by each child's prior experiences and level of engagement with the support provided. One child has demonstrated significant development across all areas, which aligns with the positive progress made by their family, supported by the provider's therapeutic team.

In contrast, progress for another child has been affected by external factors beyond the home's control. Staff are aware of the impact this has on the child's engagement and continue to offer reassurance while strengthening the positive relationships already established.

Educational progress is evident, supported by strong collaboration between the home and school to ensure that children's needs and behaviours are appropriately addressed. Where an educational setting was found to be ineffective in promoting a child's development, appropriate action was taken and the child no longer attended.

Children's health needs are consistently well managed. Staff prioritise urgent healthcare requirements to minimise any long-term impact. Targeted support around vaping is in place for one child, helping them to understand the associated health risks. Therapeutic input has proven effective for one child, enabling them to better regulate their emotions. Staff continue to encourage another child to recognise the value of engaging with mental health professionals.

Children's interests are encouraged and well supported, for example cheerleading, scouts, swimming, and arts and crafts. One child who likes computer games has clear rules and boundaries in place. This is managed well by staff and means the child's time is balanced with other interests.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them. Staff support the progression of family time in line with children's needs and safety. One parent talked positively about the support in place from staff.

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

Staff demonstrate effective behaviour management strategies that support children's emotional well-being. One child expressed feeling safe within the home environment, highlighting the positive impact of the care provided. Tailored support from both staff and a therapist has helped the child develop strategies to manage their own behaviour more effectively, resulting in reduced distress during periods of heightened emotion. The team manages increasing risk-taking behaviours for another child effectively.

Staff remain vigilant and inquisitive, actively seeking to deepen their understanding of each child's experiences and needs. The manager works with external professionals to establish and maintain a clear safety plan that guides staff in reducing potential risks.

Consistent rules and boundaries are upheld to provide children with a stable and environment. Through creative and engaging key-work sessions, the team supports children in developing their awareness of risk and learning practical strategies to keep themselves safe.

Incidents of children going missing are managed well. Staff use curiosity to understand the circumstances and motivations for children. The manager supports the team to ensure that there is a safe balance for children between developing their independence and staying safe.

Risk assessments are not consistent with safety plans. Assessments do not clearly identify the key and most current concerns for children despite these being clear in safety plans. This means that documents provide different perspectives for staff on the concerns for children. The manager began to address this shortfall during inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a good understanding of the needs of the children in her care and advocates for them. The manager is reflective and supports staff to understand the impact of their practice on children. Staff spoke positively about being part of a team and how well they are supported in their roles.

The manager has built positive partnerships with the police, school and parents to support a greater understanding of children's needs and risks. The manager is effective in challenging other agencies to reach better outcomes for children. This includes being proactive in considering how experiences in children's lives may influence their welfare and putting plans in place to reduce the impact.

The manager uses team meetings and supervision sessions to reinforce the expectations of staff. There is learning identified following incidents and shared reflection as a team. This supports staff practice by ensuring that there are improved processes in place in response to the team's understanding of the background to children's behaviours.

Annual staff appraisals capture and reflect on children's feedback about the people who care for them. However, they do not consider the views of professionals who have worked with the staff member.

The manager has not notified Ofsted of serious incidents involving children in a timely way.

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) Specifically, that all risk assessments for a child are consistent in outlining the up-to-date risks and are consistent in the strategies they provide to reduce risk.	31 August 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or	31 August 2025

there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.

A notification made under this regulation—

must include details of—

the matter;

the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and

any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter;

must be made or confirmed in writing.

(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that annual appraisals of staff take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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 4 Life Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: Maria Hope

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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