

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 registered in July 2022.

At the time of this inspection, one child and one young adult were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

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: 8 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2023	Full	Good
05/05/2021	Full	Good
12/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is decorated to a high standard and the children's presence in the home is felt in every room. Children's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their individual personalities and interests and children's photos and artwork are displayed throughout the home.

Children have trusting relationships with staff, who know them well. There was animated conversation and laughter in the home during the inspection. Children's positive relationships with staff have enabled them to develop stability and a sense of belonging. One child said, 'This is the first time I have felt real love and care.' When asked to describe love, the child said, 'The staff.'

Children regularly attend school or other appropriate education settings. Staff work closely with education professionals to understand and reduce any barriers to learning. A teacher for one child said, 'They [the child] were not meeting targets but this improved after moving and they achieved expected grades in their SATs in all areas.' The manager sensitively considers the impact of children's transition points in education and when children need additional support, she advocates for this.

Children have regular contact with the provider's therapist. The therapist works closely with the staff team and education staff to ensure that all those working with children understand them and offer consistent care. As a result, children develop a sense of security and predictability about the care they receive. Children are helped to manage their emotions and behaviours. This is achieved through clear and consistent boundaries, recognition and praise and a restorative approach to any incidents. Children understand their plans.

Children are supported to develop a level of independence appropriate to their age. The manager and staff have worked closely with adult services in one local authority so that the young adult living in the home has support in place when they move from the home.

Children's time with family and significant adults is regarded as important by the staff team, who support and facilitate this. When difficulties arise in children's family relationships, children are supported to communicate their feelings and staff consider the impact of this on their behaviours and emotions.

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

Children feel safe in the home and can identify a member of staff they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Incidents are rare but when they happen, the manager responds rigorously and updates relevant external professionals. The manager reviews incidents to understand practice in the home and to identify areas for learning.

Children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely. Staff understand children's experiences. They use de-escalation techniques and strategies in line with care plans, which are developed in consultation with the provider's therapist. The effective use of de-escalation techniques means that no restraints have been used in the home since the last inspection.

The home has a system for safe recruitment. However, there are some gaps in the provider's understanding of the employment history of one member of staff.

Professionals working with the staff team speak positively about the commitment of staff and the provider's therapist to promote positive outcomes for children. A teacher for one child said, 'The time they [the child] take to regulate emotions has reduced since moving to the home. They started to understand their feelings and emotions.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a suitably qualified, experienced manager who knows the children and staff well.

The manager responds swiftly to complaints, seeks a resolution and also considers how to mitigate against further complaints. When children have complained, their views are responded to swiftly by the manager, who informs them of the outcome of their complaint.

The manager has systems in place to monitor and review staff practice. Management oversight is evident on all incident records and this is used to identify staff training needs and to make changes in practice.

Staff have completed all mandatory training and training which is specific to children's individual needs. When the manager identifies gaps in staff awareness of children's needs, she supports learning to increase their skills and knowledge. This gives reassurance that staff understand children and are able to respond to them confidently.

When they have completed their probation period, the staff are given opportunities to achieve the appropriate qualifications. However, not all staff have achieved this within the relevant timescale. The manager has a plan in place to address this.

Staff feel supported by the manager. Regular supervision takes place, but this is not always reflective and focused on practice. Appraisals take place yearly but do not take account of feedback from children, other professionals or colleagues. Regular team meetings take place, but the manager is not yet consistently using these as an opportunity to share her learning from research.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))	31 December 2023

In particular, the registered person must explore any gaps in the employment history of staff and ensure that all staff have achieved the appropriate qualification within the relevant timescale.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive supervision 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)
- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisals take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of children and other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are offered opportunities in team meetings and supervision to consider research and its application to practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.11)

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

Inspectors

Sarah Jackson, Social Care Inspector
Stacey Ilaboya, Social Care Inspector

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