

1256904

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this children's home. The home is registered to provide care for up to 3 children with social and emotional difficulties and/or who have learning disabilities.

2 children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

There is currently no registered manager in place. The previous registered manager of the home left in November 2025. A new manager is in place and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 2026

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: 27 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2024	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2024	Full	Good
30/11/2022	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good care and support from a dedicated staff team. Staff build trusting relationships with children and create a relaxed environment in which children feel comfortable. Staff and children interact positively with each other.

Children have made progress from their individual starting points. One child with learning difficulties made significant progress in their independence skills, communication and being able to regulate their emotions.

Children experience positive moves on from the home. For one child who transitioned to a foster placement, this was well planned to meet the needs of the child and included visits and sleepovers with the support of staff. The home's therapist undertook direct work with the child to prepare them for the move, and staff created a 'now and then' book, which was a visual aid to help the child understand the transition.

Staff are proactive in researching information to support children. For one child, staff were able to create a food menu of complex carbohydrates that had a positive impact on the child's sleeping pattern.

Children are registered with relevant health services and benefit from support from the home's therapist. Staff support children to engage with education. One child has made progress with their ability to use Picture Exchange Communication System, which school professionals attributed to the work that staff have completed at home with the child.

The home celebrates different events and cultures every month to support the children's learning and understanding of equality and diversity. At the time of the inspection, they were celebrating International Women's Day with a display in the home of photos of women who have inspired the staff.

The home environment is clean and comfortable. Children's bedrooms are personalised. One child has a poster of their favourite footballer on display. However, some areas of the home are not well maintained, including the garage, which was unkempt. There were also dirty doors and door frames and a damaged sofa.

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

Children say that they feel safe in the home. They can identify a trusting adult who they can speak to if they are worried. As a result, there have been no missing-from-home incidents.

Staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities well. Children's plans are reviewed regularly. They include clear strategies and guidance for staff to follow to safeguard children. This ensures that there is a consistent approach to safeguarding children.

Direct work with children is creative and tailored to their individual learning styles. Staff use a range of tools, including interactive worksheets and visual aids, to help children understand their experiences and develop new skills. However, direct work is not always done with children following incidents. This prevents children from reflecting on their behaviour and developing skills to manage their emotions more effectively.

Incidents within the home have reduced, including incidents of children being physically held. However, records of incidents in which physical intervention has been used do not include all relevant information. Debriefs are not always completed with the child or staff involved. This is a missed opportunity to learn from these incidents and develop staff's practice and check on their wellbeing.

Managers respond appropriately to children when allegations are made. Information is shared with relevant professionals in line with safeguarding procedures. Outcomes are not always shared with children. This leaves children at risk of feeling unsupported and that they are not listened to.

Safer recruitment processes are followed to ensure that only suitably vetted and safe adults work with the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager post is currently vacant. A new manager, who has a good understanding of the children and their needs, has been appointed. They have submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

The manager is child focused and a strong advocate for the children. They escalate concerns and challenge professionals and external agencies to ensure that the children's needs are met and that their rights are upheld. There is good communication with professionals.

Staff say that they feel supported by their leadership team. Staff receive regular supervision, which provides opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and identify any additional training or development needs. However, records do not demonstrate that any actions set within supervisions are followed up.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings. These provide staff with opportunities to reflect on the care being provided to the children and seek guidance on how to meet the children's individual needs from the home's therapist, who attends on occasion.

Staff have access to a range of training opportunities, both online and face to face. Not all staff have completed mandatory and needs lead training, including for one child's specific needs.

Systems are in place to review staff practice and identify any patterns or trends in relation to incidents. There is evidence of these monitoring systems being effective at times, but they do not always identify shortfalls in staff's practice.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement for each child in the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(c)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that actions from children's placement plans are completed, reviewed regularly and reasons for actions not being completed are recorded.	26 May 2026
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	26 May 2026

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff, including bank staff, complete physical intervention training and all relevant needs lead training to be able to meet the children's needs, and that there is effective and consistent management oversight on incidents, records, actions set in supervision and direct work being done with children after incidents. Where shortfalls in staff practice are identified, ensure that action is taken to address these.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	26 May 2026

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2)

(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Specifically, managers must ensure that any physical interventions are recorded in detail and that debriefs are completed with children and staff.

Recommendation

- Managers should ensure that the children's home environment meets the needs of the children and that it is homely and maintained to a good standard. Specifically, that the garage is clear of any health and safety concerns, doors and frames are clean and the sofa is repaired or replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality and purpose of care standard', page 14, paragraph 3.3 and 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: 1256904

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life Limited

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

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Michelle McGrath, Social Care Inspector

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