

1270297

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in November 2017 and is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2022.

At the time of the inspection, 2 children were living in the home. The inspectors spoke to both children about their experiences of living in the home.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 29 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2024	Full	Outstanding
07/06/2023	Full	Good
03/05/2022	Full	Good
11/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home, and one child has moved on into supported accommodation. Children are helped to move into and on from the home in a planned way. Children can identify adults they trust and are making progress from their starting points.

There has been instability in the staff team, which has led to a lack of consistency for the children. However, leaders and managers are taking action to address this issue, and there continues to be a core staff team.

Staff support children with their education and maintain regular communication with education professionals. This ensures that children are helped to reach their full academic potential.

Staff support children to spend time with people who are important to them. This helps children to maintain relationships and increase their sense of belonging and identity.

Children enjoy a range of social and leisure activities. Children enjoy holidays and are supported to engage in faith-based activities. Children are actively involved in the planning of these and experience fun and memorable times.

Children are registered with local services and receive additional support from external agencies when required. Children's emotional wellbeing needs are understood. The home's therapist works with the children and provides guidance to staff. This supports the children's emotional needs and also enables staff to reflect on and understand the children's current and emerging needs.

The home is welcoming and homely. However, a lock on both the conservatory and kitchen door limits children's access to areas of their home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There have been several incidents for the children during this inspection period. On 2 occasions, children have returned home under the influence of alcohol, and medical advice was not sought by staff. On one occasion, the staff did not undertake welfare checks on the child during the night. This compromises children's safety.

Risk management and behaviour support plans are reviewed on a regular basis. However, not all known risks have been included in one child's risk management

plan, and records do not include clear guidance for staff to follow to keep the child safe. This does not ensure that all staff know how to respond should incidents occur.

There is a well-coordinated response by staff when children go missing from the home, and action is taken to ensure the child's safe return. However, on one occasion, a child went missing from a window in the home during the night. Staff were not aware that the child had left the home, and the police were unable to speak to staff as the mobile phone was on silent. The manager took swift action to ensure this was addressed and additional safeguards put in place.

Children know how to make a complaint, and swift action is undertaken by managers when concerns are raised. Children understand what has happened as a result of their complaint. Their complaints are treated seriously and are responded to clearly.

Staff hold important conversations with children about risks they may be exposed to. Staff discuss topics such as substance misuse, online safety and their emotional wellbeing. This helps children to develop their understanding and awareness of risks while also enjoying their independence.

Safer recruitment practices are in place. All necessary checks are carried out to ensure that only safe adults are employed to work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is managed by an experienced registered manager. She is supported by a deputy manager. They also manage another home in close proximity to this home.

Staff, including the manager, receive regular reflective supervision. This enables them to reflect on the children's care needs and risks and how they support these. Staff say that they feel supported by the managers.

Professionals are complimentary about the care the children receive. Staff have developed professional relationships with external agencies, and there is good communication and partnership working to ensure the children's needs are understood.

Team meetings are held on a regular basis, and staff have access to regular therapeutic consultations with the home's internal therapist. This provides the opportunity for staff to reflect on the children's care needs and risks. However, the minutes are not specific to this home and include information about children living in the provider's other home.

The manager's oversight of incidents has lacked professional curiosity. This limits the manager's ability to review and evaluate the quality of care provided to children effectively. Serious incidents have been delayed or have not been notified to Ofsted

as required by regulation. This limits oversight of practice. Despite this, leaders and managers are able to identify opportunities to further develop the home.

Staff have completed mandatory training, but not all training has been undertaken or refreshed to meet the needs of the children, including by the manager. This means staff do not have up-to-date knowledge and skills. The home's workforce development plan is not clear and does not reflect the home's aims and objectives.

The home is visited monthly by an independent person to assess whether children are safeguarded effectively and whether the conduct of the home promotes their wellbeing. However, the reports from the visits are not submitted to Ofsted within the required timescales, as set out in the regulation.

The manager has completed the quality of care review. However, the reports do not include feedback from staff. This limits opportunities for the manager to monitor and fully evaluate the care provided to children.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that children's risks are clearly assessed. They must ensure that staff are	8 May 2026

provided with guidance and strategies to support them to reduce risks. Additionally, the registered person must ensure that systems are in place to identify shortfalls in practice and any lessons learned.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that there is robust oversight of the care provided and ensure that action is taken to address any shortfalls. Additionally, leaders and managers must ensure that recording systems are effective and that they review and evaluate all	8 May 2026

incidents to identify any learning and support to develop practice in the home.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that there is ongoing training to meet the needs of the children, and this also includes the manager.	8 May 2026
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are able to access communal areas of their home.	8 May 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— There is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	8 May 2026
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI.	8 May 2026

(Regulation 44 (7)(a))	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review considers the opinions of staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.2)

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: 1270297

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

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

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: Sandra Wild

Inspectors

Michelle Snape, Social Care Inspector

Joy Viles, Social Care Inspector

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