

2484682

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 provider. The home is registered to provide care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and has been registered with Ofsted since June 2022.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 16 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/08/2023	Full	Good
20/04/2022	Full	Good
20/04/2021	Full	Good
07/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children living in the home are making exceptional progress. Managers and staff place children at the centre of the home. Children develop trusted relationships with the staff who care for them. Children are supported by staff who are consistent in their care. Staff adapt their approach to individual children, which has helped children to develop skills and strategies to manage their behaviour.

Children's individual learning needs are understood by the staff. They are both achieving positive outcomes in education. One child has recently undertaken a GCSE exam; from their individual starting point, this is significant progress. Staff strongly advocate for children to ensure that they have access to the courses they want to pursue for further education. Preparing for moving on from school is prioritised by staff. One child has been supported to spend time visiting their college placement before the summer break to ensure a positive transition in September.

Children's plans identify specific needs and goals to help them to develop life skills for the future. One child has started to develop independent living skills at a pace which helps them to feel safe and supported. This has enabled them to spend time independently in the community.

Children are supported to try new and different activities in the community. This provides opportunities for them to meet peers, expand their horizons and embrace diverse experiences. Staff listen to children's views when they are not enjoying an activity and seek alternatives for them to try. This practice empowers the children to discover their passions, fostering a sense of curiosity, growth and fulfilment.

Children are advocated for, and staff do not give up on them. Children are able to experience opportunities which ordinarily would not be open to them. One child was able to attend their school prom because of the support of residential staff. This meant that the child was able to attend the whole prom with their peers and not miss out on this experience.

Children's health needs are met. Both children moved into the home with significant concerns in relation to oral health. One child had never used a toothbrush prior to coming into the home. They were supported to become independent in cleaning their teeth and this is now part of their daily routine. Another child refused to go to the dentist. Staff developed creative strategies to manage fears in a positive way which allowed them to tolerate the close proximity of dental staff and undergo treatment.

The home is welcoming and spacious. The house allows children to be together but also for them to have their own space. All areas of the home are nicely decorated. Children's bedrooms have been recently redecorated to their own personal taste.

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

Children say that they feel safe at home. Staff develop and work to detailed risk management and safety plans. Children are involved in these plans, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. Strategies are specific for each child and this personalised approach means that the children receive the right support at the right time for them.

Managers and staff know the children well and are intuitive to any changes in behaviour. They are professionally curious and respond immediately to any changes or emerging risks to children.

Staff have been highly effective in managing and minimising the risks of harm, especially around the risk of exploitation and online behaviour. When children are new to the home risks are quickly understood and managed, which has resulted in children's individual risks significantly reducing.

Staff are proactive and creative around reducing anxieties that the children may experience. Serious incidents are well managed with clear oversight from the manager. Notifications to Ofsted are made in a timely way and in line with regulation.

Children do not go missing from the home. Risk management plans and behaviour support plans are regularly reviewed and updated. They include guidance and strategies to inform staff of relevant risks. If children were to go missing from home, staff are well informed and would have the knowledge to deal with the situation.

Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe. Despite potential community risks of exploitation, children are supported to have family time and attend school in areas where potential risks are. Staff manage these risks suitably to ensure that the children can continue with their education and maintain relationships with those who are important to them.

Direct work sessions take place with the children around important topics and following any significant events. Staff use a variety of therapeutic interventions to ensure that key-work sessions are safe spaces where children can express their thoughts and emotions in a supportive environment.

The manager uses research-informed practice to enhance and improve children's safety. New skills and interventions are acquired based on research using the skills of relevant agencies and the expertise of the in-house therapist. This collaboration ensures that the best outcomes are achieved.

Staff involve children in finding creative alternative strategies to manage feelings in a positive way. Staff focus on de-escalation techniques, and they use their training confidently. Consequently, staff do not need to hold children to keep them safe from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a strong, consistent leadership team within the home. Managers lead by example and are effective role models for the staff and the children. The manager is enthusiastic and ambitious for children. As a result of this, she is influential in changing the lives of the children who live in the home.

Managers actively and regularly monitor the care provided. The manager has suitable systems in place to ensure that she has good oversight of the home and knows the home's strengths and weaknesses. The manager has a positive working relationship with her deputy which impacts on the overall staff team, who follow their example. Staff meetings and handovers are used effectively to ensure that there is a consistent approach taken by the staff.

Managers work effectively with professionals and family members to support children to make progress. They are focused on achieving positive outcomes for children. Feedback has been very good from social workers, health professionals and staff in the home.

Staff supervision sessions are effective and suitably recorded. They cover all aspects of the home, including children's and staff well-being. However, they do not always review staff practice, and this is a missed opportunity for reflection following significant events. Appraisals take place annually, but do not contain the views of the children.

Team meetings are held monthly. However, these meetings are a missed opportunity to talk about practice. Staff work closely with the in-house therapist, who provides them with strategy and guidance. These are discussed during the team meetings to identify how they affect the outcomes for the children, but this is not reflected in the written minutes of the meetings.

Case records of the children are updated daily and reflect the children's progress and their everyday lives. The records reflect children's achievements and are clear about plans for their futures.

There have been some staff changes. The manager is in the process of stabilising the staff team to ensure that there is greater stability and consistency for children.

Staff rotas identify the staff who are planned to work at the home, including agency and bank staff and staff covering from other services. However, the manager's hours are not recorded, therefore the rota is not always an accurate record of who has worked in the home, which may hinder the monitoring and review of 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
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)) The registered person should ensure that the manager's hours are recorded on the rota.	26 August 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the 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: 2484682

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: Sandra Wild

Inspector

Nicola Jeffery, Social Care Inspector

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