

2484682

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life 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 provider. The home is registered to provide care for up to 2 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: 16 and 17 February 2026

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	outstanding
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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: 9 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2024	Full	Outstanding
16/08/2023	Full	Good
20/04/2022	Full	Good
20/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress across all areas of their lives as a direct result of the high-quality care provided by staff. Staff understand each child's evolving needs and work diligently to build relationships founded on trust and respect. These relationships create a secure and nurturing environment in which children thrive. Since the last inspection, the 2 children have remained living in this home. They identify this as their home and refer to staff as 'family.'

Staff work effectively with health professionals to ensure that children's health needs are understood and met. Through the persistence of staff, one child has received a formal diagnosis. This has led to a shared understanding of the child's needs among the professionals working with them, which is reflected in all aspects of care planning. Staff use their strong relationships with children to help the children understand their own health needs. Staff support children to overcome barriers to engaging with health professionals. As a result, a child who previously refused all health appointments is now fully up to date and seeks medical advice with support from staff.

Staff promote a culture in the home where education and learning are highly valued. They maintain regular communication with education professionals, ensuring that children's needs are understood and met, both in education settings and at home. As a result, children are aspirational, enjoy learning and are achieving in line with their assessed targets. Staff provide meaningful learning opportunities beyond formal education. For example, a child taking animal-care qualifications has benefited from staff-supported activities with farm animals.

Children say that their views are listened to and taken seriously. Staff routinely seek and act on children's feedback about their care. Children have access to independent advocacy and understand how to make a complaint. Managers and staff work diligently to ensure that children contribute meaningfully to decisions about their care plans, including supporting them to attend their own care-planning meetings. As a result, children's views remain central to all decision-making. For example, one child requested to speak directly with the judge responsible for decisions about their future care and asked for a trusted adult to support them during a capacity assessment; both requests were agreed.

The commitment that staff show to children extends beyond their transition to adult services. The manager has arranged for one child who was due to move out to remain in the home temporarily while the local authority identifies a suitable placement, which has helped to alleviate the child's worries about moving. Staff and managers actively nurture children's support networks for the future, facilitating time with family and connected people, including for celebrations such as birthdays. These experiences strengthen children's sense of belonging and identity. Parents are included in decisions about their child's care. Staff have supported one parent to attend a parents' evening, health

appointments, and care-planning meetings. The manager demonstrates a clear understanding of parents' individual needs. One parent said they felt well informed and supported to remain actively involved in their child's life.

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

Staff understand children's individual needs and are highly attuned to changes in their wellbeing. Managers remain vigilant to emerging concerns and review these in regular safeguarding meetings, sharing updates and seeking staff contributions to ensure these discussions are purposeful. This enables risks to be identified and addressed promptly, reinforcing a strong safeguarding culture.

Children's plans provide clear guidance for staff on the steps required to keep them safe. Children receive direct therapeutic support, and the therapist also works with staff to ensure that daily care aligns with their clinical recommendations. This reflects a joined-up and consistent approach to meeting children's needs. Managers promote a culture in which staff seek to understand the underlying needs behind children's behaviours. As a result, staff respond to each child's core needs rather than reacting to challenging behaviour. Both children identified staff as people who help to keep them safe.

Staff hold meaningful conversations with children to help them understand risk, develop strategies to stay safe and recognise potential dangers. As a result, children are increasingly able to identify and respond to risk and seek support when needed. This has contributed to a reduction in risk-taking behaviours and supports the development of essential life skills. After any incidents, staff work closely with the manager to reflect on the learning and implement necessary changes. Managers seek the views of the child, staff, and other connected people to identify and embed learning. As a result, staff practice continues to evolve to meet children's changing needs, thereby reducing risk.

Staff use their trusted relationships with children to help them to navigate difficult feelings and build confidence in working with professionals who are there to keep them safe. For example, managers and staff supported one child to understand the role of the police, offering reassurance and direct guidance. As a result, the child was able to report a concern and respond appropriately to police questions. This has helped to overcome previous reluctance to engage with the police and supports the development of important life skills for the future.

Children are encouraged to take manageable risks appropriate to their age and understanding. Staff support them to develop key skills, through volunteering opportunities, socialising and travelling independently, recognising that increasing independence naturally involves exposure to new situations and risk. Staff use these opportunities to guide and support children, including helping one child spend time in the community independently and go on holidays abroad.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A child-centred and inspirational manager leads the home. Although the manager and deputy oversee 2 homes, they remain visible and maintain strong relationships with the children. The manager upholds high standards through effective monitoring systems and responds decisively to any identified shortfalls, ensuring these are resolved quickly. This approach reinforces a culture of accountability among staff. The manager has a clear understanding of the quality of care provided but does not demonstrate how feedback from other professionals or connected people informs ongoing evaluation.

The manager routinely spends individual time with children to seek their views on the care they receive and acts on their feedback, helping them to feel listened to. She leads the staff team by example and fosters a culture of emotional warmth and affection, resulting in children confidently initiating hugs and high fives with staff. As a result, one child who was reluctant to have any human touch now seeks out hugs from staff.

Staff morale in the home is exceptionally high. Staff enjoy their work and feel well supported by managers. They share a strong commitment to promoting the best interests of the children. Staff work collaboratively to organise their working hours around the children's needs; for example, one member of staff rearranged planned leave to support a child through a scheduled operation.

The manager is committed to continuous staff development and provides a range of opportunities for staff to enhance their skills. Reflection and research-informed practice are used effectively to support professional growth, directly improving the care provided to children. For example, the manager shared research and led reflective discussions on how children living away from their family may experience Christmas and similar celebrations. This learning informed the planning and delivery of celebrations tailored to each child's needs. As a result, challenging times and emotions are anticipated and mitigated, helping children to form positive memories.

The manager works closely with other professionals, children's families and connected people. She makes strong contributions to care-planning decisions, advocates for children and appropriately challenges other professionals when children's needs are not met. For one child, the manager's challenge led to a change in their care plan to ensure their assessed needs are met.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that feedback from professionals and connected people is used to inform the ongoing monitoring of the care provided to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 54, paragraph 10.23)

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 Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: Sandra Wild

Inspector

Sally Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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