

# 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 provides care for up to three children. The statement of purpose describes providing a service for children who are unable to live in a family setting and have behavioural or other difficulties and need intensive support.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 20 and 21 April 2022

|                                                                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | good |
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|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

**Date of last inspection:** 20 April 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 20/04/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 07/08/2019      | Full            | Good                 |
| 26/02/2019      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children benefit from well-planned care, support and guidance which promotes stability, enabling them to flourish. They have positive relationships with staff, who understand the individual needs of each child, providing care that reflects these needs.

Staff support and encourage children to attend education, including post-16 education. As a result, one child attends college on a full-time basis and the other is currently visiting colleges to assess the right educational course, having recently left school.

Children attend healthcare appointments and are supported with all their healthcare needs. They have access to a therapist to help support their emotional and mental health well-being. The therapist meets on a weekly basis with the management team to discuss and share ongoing strategies to further support the children's emotional well-being. This means that the staff's practice is informed by qualified advice which contributes to children's plans and behaviour management strategy.

Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements, which enables children to recognise and appreciate the progress they have made. They take part in a range of activities, go on day trips of their choice and holidays which they plan with staff. Children are supported to understand about wider community issues, including fundraising for specific charities they have chosen.

Staff understand the importance of supporting children to maintain positive relationships with family and friends. One parent said: 'I always feel welcomed into the home when I visit and cannot praise the care provided to my child highly enough.'

Children learn skills to help prepare them for moving on to independence. This includes budgeting, shopping and cooking, as well as support to access and use transport independently. One child said, 'I was really anxious about going on public transport, but staff supported me, and I can now go to visit family on my own as well as getting to and from college on my own.'

Children's wishes and views are listened to and encouraged by staff. For example, one room has been redecorated and refurbished to be used as an additional television and 'film night' lounge. Children contributed their ideas to the decor and furnishings, and say that it is a great place to relax.

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

Children's safety and welfare are central to the care and support they receive. Individual placement plans contain information in relation to their histories and any

identified areas of risk. Additional risk assessments are developed which recognise known and potential risks. Since the last inspection, these have been further developed. However, they still do not include reference to meeting specific needs in relation to autism spectrum disorder, but additional support and advice have been provided by the in-house therapist and shared through staff meetings, which has enabled staff to develop strategies to offer additional support in a consistent manner.

Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents of children going missing from home. There has only been one incident of physical intervention to support a child when they were at risk of harm to themselves. This intervention was minimal and effective.

Behaviour management strategies focus on positive praise and reward, with clear and consistent boundaries in place. This approach is effective. One child said: 'I think it is better to be encouraged by praise and support. Staff explain things to me if I cannot do something or it is wrong and the reasons why.'

Children say that they feel safe living at the home. One child said: 'This is a brilliant home to live in. I am happy here and when I look back over the past year or so, I have done really well. Staff have helped me to gain confidence to use public transport and now I go to college, can visit family and see friends independently, and understand about keeping safe.'

Since the last inspection, the practice of locking internal doors at night has stopped and therefore the children's access in the home is not restricted.

Staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire drills are held on a regular basis and fire equipment is maintained and checked appropriately. However, internal fire doors are wedged open; this does not adhere to fire regulations.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The previous registered manager retired from the organisation at the end of February 2022. The deputy manager has been appointed as the manager of this home and another home in the organisation. She has applied to be the registered manager. She has worked at the home for several years and demonstrates a good understanding of her responsibilities as a manager. Her practice is child-focused, and she has a thorough understanding of each child's needs.

Throughout the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the home, on occasions, required the use of agency staff to cover for staffing shortages and changes. When this was the case, the same agency staff were used, who worked alongside permanent staff so as to provide minimum disruption for the children. The home is now fully staffed with a permanent staff team in place. The organisation's safe recruitment practice means that all staff are thoroughly vetted before they start working in the home.

Staff undertake regular training and development opportunities to continue to enhance their skills and knowledge. They receive regular formal supervision, which enables them to reflect on their practice and review the care for the children in the home. In addition to monthly team meetings, daily handovers and informal supervision underpin staff practice.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of the home. The home is meeting the aims and objectives as detailed in the statement of purpose.

The manager ensures collaborative working with other professionals to provide children with appropriate support systems they need to enable their continued progression. A social worker said: 'Staff understand and recognise the needs of [name of child] and understand the potential triggers for her behaviours. They do everything possible to encourage and support her engagement with other professionals to enable her to have the best possible outcomes.'

Overall, monthly monitoring is effective. However, one accident was not recorded as required, although appropriate action was taken to support the child following the accident.

The manager has positively responded to the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. For example, notifications are made in a timely manner to the regulator and internal doors are no longer locked at night. The children have been fully involved in choosing new decor and furnishings for their bedrooms. Plans for training of staff are updated regularly to reflect training undertaken and safeguarding records clearly record outcomes.

Generally, children's files are well maintained. However, some documentation from the placing authority for one child had not been received and there was no formal process in place to escalate the request for this documentation.

Staff maintain ongoing recordings. These are clear and provide a comprehensive picture of the children's progress and outcomes. Individual memory books record a clear picture of the time the children have spent at the home. They contain pictures and comments of activities they have taken part in throughout their time at the home, helping them to build memories and having something to look back on over time.

## 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, 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      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>(Regulation 5 (a)(c))</p> | 1 August 2022 |
| <p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home—</p> <p>paragraph (1) does not apply; and</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staff do not prop open any designated fire doors.</p>                                                                                                                                                       | 20 May 2022   |
| <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1)(a) Schedule 3))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that details of any accident or serious illness involving the child while accommodated in the home are included in the child's records.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 July 2022   |

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that documents which assess risk to a child offer clear guidance to staff and take into account any known diagnosis, such as autism spectrum disorder. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

## **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:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sarah Oldham, Social Care Inspector

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