

2547837

Registered provider: After Care (NW) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately operated home, providing care for up to 3 children who may experience social, emotional and/or mental health needs.

There are currently 2 children living in the home. Both children were present during the inspection and spoke with the inspector.

There is no registered manager in post. A manager has been recruited and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 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: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2025	Full	Good
07/06/2023	Full	Good
15/09/2022	Full	Good
08/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last full inspection, 2 children have left the home, and 2 children have moved in. Moves into the home have not been well planned. Leaders and managers have not considered the impact of new children moving in for children already living in the home. Not all professionals have been consulted with, and not all relevant information has been gathered prior to children moving in. This has significantly impacted on the progress of the child already living in the home and notice being given for the child who has moved in.

The children living in the home are provided with a warm, homely and nurturing environment. The home is beautifully decorated and well maintained. Children are actively involved in choosing the décor within the home, and their bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes. However, due to current staff sleeping arrangements, children do not always have access to all areas of their home.

Children's health needs are being met. Staff ensure that they register children with the relevant health professionals, and that children's health appointments are up to date.

The staff encourage and support children to keep in touch with their family and friends. The staff support visits to family and ensure that support is available, specifically with regard to one child's behaviour, which can be challenging for parents to manage. This helps children to maintain a sense of their identity.

Staff encourage children to attend school. Both children have good attendance and are making progress in education. The manager has been proactive in developing relationships with educational professionals, and this has resulted in a multi-agency approach to any difficulties presented around education.

The current team of staff caring for the children know the children and their needs well. They have worked hard to build positive relationships with the children, and they want the best for the children they are caring for. However, this has not always been the case. There has been a high level of agency staff used, and this has resulted in inconsistency for the children.

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

Relationships between the children living in the home have not been managed well. As a result, there has been an escalation in incidents. Poor care planning around the needs of the children has resulted in a high number of incidents of verbal and physical aggression between the children living in the home. There has also been an increase of assaults on staff.

Strategies to manage children's behaviours are not effective. Staff do not support children to manage their emotions more effectively. For one child this has resulted in a deterioration in their behaviours and ability to manage their emotions. For the other child this has resulted in a high number of restrictive physical interventions being used.

Staff know the identified risks for children and there are clear and individualised assessments in place. Staff are aware of the strategies to implement for children who may go missing or are at risk of significant harm. Staff respond appropriately to children who have been at risk due to the misuse of substances.

Conflict management is not effective. The relationship between the children remains broken. There is little evidence of restorative practices, and children are being encouraged to spend time separately in the home to reduce incidents. Staff lock doors to restrict children's access to areas of the home as a means of behaviour management.

Staff share information appropriately with other agencies to build up a clearer picture of what is happening in the children's lives. Professionals reported that the managers and staff share and escalate their concerns appropriately and act to safeguard the child. A headteacher reported that the staff have good relationships with professionals, especially those in education.

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

There is a manager in post, who is passionate and committed to the children they are caring for. The members of the team speak very highly of the support that they receive from the manager. However, she has limited experience of working in residential and management. There has not been adequate support in place for her to ensure that the children in the home receive a good quality of care.

The members of the management team have not ensured that the home is properly staffed to provide a consistent level of care to the children. There have been a significant number of occasions where agency staff have been used to care for the children. This has resulted in instability for the children and inconsistency in staff implementing behaviour management strategies.

There has been poor oversight by senior leaders. Decisions about children coming to live at the home are not inclusive and have not balanced the needs of the child moving in with those already living in the home. These decisions have not had clear oversight by leaders and managers. Therefore, referral information has not been fully explored, resulting in destabilising one child and giving notice on another.

Staff receive all the necessary training to meet the needs of the children. The manager has a system in place to ensure that all staff attend training and development to support them in their roles. However, not all staff receive regular performance-related supervision.

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 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 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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff, including the manager, have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of the children. Additionally, senior	22 April 2026

leadership must ensure that they have sufficient oversight of the home to ensure that quality care is provided to the children in the home.	
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 children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that they have all relevant information regarding children moving into the home to ensure that moves in are positive and do not have a detrimental impact for the children living there.	22 April 2026
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;	22 April 2026

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(b)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that proactive steps are taken to reduce incidents of verbal and physical aggression between children living in the home, that staff have the knowledge, skills and ability to de-escalate incidents of challenging behaviour and that action is taken to safeguard children at all times.	
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)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that arrangements for staff sleeping overnight at the home do not impact of the children's shared living space, specifically the dining room. Additionally, the locking of rooms as a means of behaviour management should not be used as a routine method to manage behaviour.	22 April 2026
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and	22 April 2026

positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— - meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; - help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; - encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; - help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and - without harm to anyone; - communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; - De-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; - that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(xi)(b)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff support children to develop and maintain positive relationships.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— - receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and - have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	22 April 2026

Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision in line with the timescales outlined in the statement of purpose.	
This requirement is restated.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b) (5)) In particular, leaders and managers must complete a review of the quality of care provided to children, ensuring that this includes the feedback of children living in the home.	22 April 2026

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: 2547837

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: After Care (NW) Limited

Registered provider address: After Care (North West) Ltd, 45 Kensington Road,
Southport PR9 0RT

Responsible individual: Timothy Blundell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

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