

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 three children who may be experiencing social, emotional and/or mental health needs.

There are currently two children living in this home. Both children were present during the inspection and spoken to by the inspector.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2024.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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: good

Significant improvements have been made to the decor and maintenance of the property. Children now live in a well-appointed and modern home. Children have been supported to decorate their rooms to show their individuality, and there are personal touches throughout the house. Children enjoy a welcoming and comfortable home environment.

Children are being supported to try new recreational activities. Staff listen to the children's likes and interests and encourage them to try new things. Children are enjoying fun, social experiences.

Staff regularly talk to children about important issues affecting them. Staff provide children with useful information and resources. These conversations inform and guide children to understand their own experiences and make positive choices. Children are supported to learn about important topics.

Children's physical and mental health are understood and well supported by staff. When children have additional support needs, staff make sure that specialist services are in place quickly to meet their needs. Children do not experience delay in accessing the services they need to promote good health.

Staff provide well-planned support for children who are moving to independence. This support starts in plenty of time to prepare children for this change. One child's family member said, 'She [the child] is doing well in her new place. I am happy with what staff did to help her before she moved.'

Staff support children to have better relationships with friends and family. Staff know the importance of children spending time with those they care about. Staff do all they can to make sure that children can do so safely. Children's relationships with their family members are improving.

Professionals and family members are happy with the care children are receiving. One family member said, '[The child] was treated like a family member rather than someone the staff are paid to care for.' A social worker said, 'The home has a family vibe. Staff are consistent; they make my job so much easier.'

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

The registered manager has a thorough understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. She closely monitors the progress staff are making in relation to keeping children safe. Children are safer because of the care they receive.

Staff have a range of skills and experiences. The whole team has attended training in relation to protecting children. As a result, staff are confident in managing a variety of risks.

Children have positive relationships with staff. There have not been any incidents where staff have had to hold children to keep them safe. Children respond well to the nurturing, therapeutic techniques that staff use when caring for them.

Staff take all appropriate steps when children go missing from home. Staff follow protocols and are proactive in trying to find the child. Information is shared quickly with other professionals to make sure that everyone involved in the search has the most up-to-date information. When children return home, staff talk to them about their risks. Professionals have a better understanding of what is going on in each child's life.

The registered manager generally has thorough oversight of any safeguarding incidents. However, evidence of learning and reflection from incidents, such as when children go missing, is limited. Children's plans are not being updated to show that staff adapt their approach as they learn about each child.

The registered manager keeps the location risk assessment up to date. This includes awareness and mitigation of local risks, proactive safeguarding strategies and police coordination. Staff respond promptly to emerging risks in the local area.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager uses comprehensive systems to maintain effective oversight of the home. She uses various processes, including external monitoring and feedback, to inform quality assurance. The registered manager is driving improvements to care quality.

Leaders and managers develop strong relationships with children, professionals and family members. One social worker said, 'Communication is great. Nothing is too much trouble.'

Staff appreciate the support they receive from managers and from each other. Team meetings are also used as a useful way for staff to share good practice. As a result, the team works well together, and staff morale is high.

Staff have completed a range of useful training. This includes training specific to the needs of the children. One member of staff said, 'It is a supportive and caring environment.' Children receive consistent, quality care.

Staff receive supervision regularly. This is reflective and helps staff to think about their relationships with the children and their own professional development. However, there have been significant gaps in the supervision of the registered

manager. In addition, not all staff have received an annual appraisal of their practice. This is a missed opportunity for formal oversight of staff development.

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
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)) This requirement is restated.	30 May 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should undertake learning and reflection in relation to serious incidents, disruptions and placement breakdowns to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing significant events. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 10.24)

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: Jennifer Newman

Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Inspector

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