

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 experiencing social, emotional and/or mental health needs.

The registered manager has been in post since July 2020.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account: good

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

Date of last inspection: 8 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children feel happy and cared for while living in this home. One child said, 'This is the only place I've ever felt loved.' Another child described when talking about staff, 'They do everything they can for me. I know they've always got me.' Staff are nurturing to children, resulting in children feeling relaxed.

Children receive a high standard of support and care. Staff take creative approaches to supporting children. Children's views are at the heart of all planning. As a result, children feel listened to and valued.

Staff form effective relationships with professionals and family members. Communication between staff and the important people in each child's life is excellent. Children therefore experience a holistic and consistent approach to their care.

Staff understand each child's individual needs and goals. Each child has detailed plans in respect of their health, education and leisure time. Staff regularly review these plans and so are knowledgeable about what support is needed to help each child reach their potential. Therefore, children are making good progress from their starting points.

The home environment is warm and inviting, and attempts have been made to create a welcoming family atmosphere. However, there are unresolved maintenance issues and some areas of the home and furniture need updating. One child has noted in a children's meeting that the dining chairs are old and need replacing.

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

Staff are passionate about the welfare of the children. Staff go the extra mile to keep children safe. Staff understand potential indicators of increased risk and know their role and responsibilities in a range of safeguarding scenarios. Children are safer as a result of living in this home.

Risk management plans are of inconsistent quality. In particular, the self-harm and ligature risk management plan does not provide staff with a clear guide on how to manage this risk. This has not impacted on children but has the potential to do so. Staff take an empathetic, trauma-informed approach. One child said, 'Even when I'm being an angry person, they [staff] always understand. They always do their best to help me.' This helps children develop trusting relationships with the adults looking after them.

Regular key-work sessions are used to support children in understanding their own life experiences and risks. This means that children are not just kept safe by the

care that they receive, but they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to improve their overall safety in the long term.

The staff team uses a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management. Achievements are frequently celebrated, and negative consequences are only used as a last resort. Staff are trained to safely use physical intervention, but incidents of restraint are rare. Records of physical interventions do not detail all essential information. This is a missed opportunity for learning.

Children have been reported missing from this home. There is a detailed missing-from-care protocol in place, which staff understand and follow. Children are not always offered a return home interview carried out by an independent person. This means that children have not had the opportunity to explore their reasons for going missing with someone impartial.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably qualified manager. The manager is proactive and enthusiastic about achieving the best outcomes for the children in her care. She encourages the staff team to share this attitude. This helps children to recognise their own potential and make good progress.

The manager considers whether staff are able to meet each child's needs before they move in. She takes time to review the risks in the local area and the needs of other children who already live in the home. This approach to the assessment of risk informs a culture of safe practice in the home.

The registered manager has implemented good systems for internal oversight. This regular review allows her to identify and address any issues in a timely manner.

Supervision takes place regularly and is of consistently good quality. Supervision is reflective and child-focused. This allows the manager to conduct an effective formal evaluation of staff performance. Staff feel supported by the management team.

The registered manager completes an effective review of the quality of care. Feedback from professionals and children is a useful contribution. Robust analysis and evaluation mean that the manager has a good understanding of the areas of improvement.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the registered person should ensure— 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)(b)) Specifically, the registered person should ensure that risk management plans consistently include clear actions that staff need to take.	17 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— a description of the measure and its duration; and that within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(c)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that records consistently include all details of the restraint used and the child's views.	17 November 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is well maintained. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 45 Kensington Road, Southport, Lancashire PR9 0RT

Responsible individual: Timothy Blundell

Registered manager: Rosie Binfield

Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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