

2575463

Registered provider: First 4 Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private company. It provides care and support for up to two children who have a learning disability. The home is committed to providing care to children on a long-, medium- and short-term basis, depending on the needs of the child.

This is the first inspection since the home was registered on 7 December 2020. There has been no change in manager since registration. There are currently two children living at the home.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children who live at this home have a range of diverse and complex health and learning needs. Meticulous and robust processes are in place to plan for children's admissions, even when this has been at short notice. The admission of both children has been managed exceptionally well and children experience highly responsive support from staff who are attuned to their needs. As a result, children have settled quickly and almost immediately start to make positive progress.

Children have developed extremely close and trusting relationships with the manager and the staff. The children are non-verbal. However, their body language, facial expressions and demeanour suggests that they feel safe and happy. The home radiates warmth, love and a sense of belonging, and the children have grown up with the same staff team throughout their time at their home.

Education is a priority and the manager and staff have been instrumental in ensuring there are strong working relationships and good levels of communication with the specialist schools children attend. Communication books are used to support the children more efficiently, whether these are used by the teaching staff at school or in the home. The manager strongly advocated for a school place for one child as 'red tape' appeared to be holding up the process. This brought a timely end to the child being home tutored.

Activities inside and outside of the home are tailored to the diverse needs and choices of the children. One child loves the sensory feel of rippling water, the touch of leaves and bark and will spend hours in nature reserves. Another child loves moving objects such as cars, trains and even pushchairs. These hobbies bring immense pleasure, and they help the children self-regulate and manage their emotions better.

Consultation with the children is impressive and staff go that extra mile to involve children in day-to-day decisions, in planning activities and in developing their independence. The home uses a range of communication tools, such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) symbols and pictures that feature throughout the home. Communication boards for each child captures their voice, and monthly targets are visual and focused on a 'small steps approach'. Children have made exceptional progress in so many areas of their lives, and this has opened the door to new experiences and opportunities relative to their learning disability.

Progress and achievements, regardless of how small these may appear to be, are celebrated, and children receive certificates and positive rewards of their choosing. Milestones such as going shopping with staff and having fun swimming are captured in the recording systems and shared with parents. Life story books capture the

children's lives and experiences and will hold so many memories for them and their families.

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

Keeping the children safe is a priority. The manager and staff have created an extremely open and transparent safeguarding culture within the home. Any vulnerabilities the children have are fully assessed, discussed and documented meaning that children live safely and securely.

Staff are skilled and adept in what they do and can predict changes in mood and behaviour. Staff respond sensitively while taking measures to minimise incidents of, for example, self-injurious behaviour. Staff are confident in their ability to de-escalate situations and apply known strategies, such as distraction or quiet timeout, to help soothe a situation.

Managing behaviour and positive handling plans are exceptionally child centred. Creative solutions are taken to improve the safety of the children, such as identifying safe areas within the home. Children are helped to understand what measures staff will take to keep them safe from harm.

Staff support children to express themselves and articulate their feelings through pictures, PECS communication and simple Makaton. Staff are skilled at reading children's body language and behaviour, which helps the children to feel comfortable in their surroundings. Interactions between the manager, staff and the children are relaxed, with plenty of laughter, hugs and emotional warmth.

Positive relationships have been established with health, education and social care professionals working with the children. This coordinated and well-managed approach ensures that children's complex needs are being met. Professional feedback is extremely positive and both children are very settled. A paediatrician said, 'I have no doubt my patient will thrive in their care, as I am impressed by the staff's rapid understanding of his needs.'

The employment of staff is robust and thorough. Vetting procedures and a structured induction and probationary period give staff a positive message about their roles and responsibilities. This ensures that safe recruitment practices are in place.

The manager and staff work hard to establish positive relationships with family members. As one professional commented, 'All staff are very approachable. They have won parents over and [have] broken down barriers.' Family time is meaningful, and it promotes positive and safe experiences for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is suitably experienced and is working towards his level five qualification in leadership and management. He leads by example and is an inspirational role model.

The staff team are fully supported, which enables them to feel confident in their roles and, in turn, helps them to focus on the needs of the children. As one member of staff quoted,

‘The manager is the pinnacle of this home and everything it stands for. His positive energy and positive recognition and appreciation of his staff is what makes an outstanding manager.’

The manager adopts a very robust monitoring and auditing process that underpins the high-quality, child-centred recording activity. Reading the files provides a wealth of insight on the progress and achievements made by the young people, and their personalities, characteristics and needs are well-documented to ensure that their day-to-day care continues to be met.

The manager is very clear on his roles and responsibilities in respect of the children in his care and his staff. He ensures that all relevant individuals are kept informed of any serious events and consults regularly with all professionals. The manager is a good advocate for the children and will challenge decisions in their best interests.

The members of the staff team are exposed to a wide range of training opportunities specific to the individual needs of the children. This includes training in epilepsy, autistic spectrum disorder and therapeutic play. The manager uses research to enhance care practice, and staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisals. This means that staff are well-equipped to fulfil their duties and responsibilities.

The manager has promoted an inquisitive learning culture. During quiet moments when children are at school, staff were seen to be working on their level 3 diploma or refreshing their training. There are frequent topical quizzes and scenario-based questions which improve staff awareness and confidence. This is promoting a well-rounded and skilled staff team in which professional development is encouraged.

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: 2575463

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: First 4 Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 16 St. Wilfrid's Road, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 6AA

Responsible individual: Carolann Dodds

Registered manager: Marley Highton

Inspectors

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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