

2602585

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 7 February 2026. He is suitably experienced.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke to both children.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

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: 12 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2025	Full	Good
12/09/2023	Full	Good
17/01/2023	Full	Good
21/09/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home, and one has moved on. Moves into and out of the home are carefully planned and sensitively managed.

Children's views about living at the home are positive. The interactions between staff and children are warm and natural, and staff are attentive to children's individual needs. As a result, children feel happy and well cared for.

Staff work hard to create a comfortable, welcoming, and homely environment for children. Children's bedrooms are personalised with photographs, light displays and bedding that reflect their individual interests. This contributes to children's sense of belonging and helps children to feel valued and comfortable in their home.

Children make progress from their starting points and their education is prioritised. When children experience difficulties in relation to their education, staff advocate effectively on their behalf to ensure that their needs are addressed. This is echoed by one professional who said, '[Name of child] has made a significant amount of progress over time, both in terms of home and school and their emotional regulation.' As a result, children develop greater confidence and access their learning with the right support in place.

Children's cultural and identity needs are well understood and actively promoted. Through one-to-one discussions, staff use age-appropriate stories and resources to help children develop an awareness and understanding of their identity. For example, one piece of work explored the impact of racism, and another helped a child to understand that a person's value is not defined by what they own. This demonstrates that children are helped to build a positive sense of self and belonging.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. Children take part in a range of activities and after-school clubs that enable them to spend meaningful time with staff, friends, and their family. Children are actively involved in planning their activities. They benefit from experiences that reflect their interests, such as football, bike rides, and craft activities. This means that children enjoy positive experiences that contribute to their overall happiness.

Children benefit from individualised care informed by external professionals and the home's therapists. Regular reviews of children's plans and assessments ensure that staff understand children's needs and how best to meet them. Children are helped to prepare for their own review meetings, with their views and aspirations at the centre of planning. However, statutory documents are not always received promptly. While the manager has acted to address this, it has not been sufficiently escalated. As a result, staff experience some delays in accessing children's essential plans.

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

Staff and managers understand children's risks well. Risk assessments and plans consider what behaviours might mean, as well as the strategies to reduce risks. When children display worrying behaviours, staff and managers review and update risk assessments so that there is clear guidance to follow. Staff explain these changes to children, which supports their understanding. As a result, children feel safe and can describe the ways that staff help them. One child said, 'They protect me, they keep me safe.'

Physical interventions are rarely used and only when necessary to keep children or others safe. Staff are skilled in de-escalation and use these strategies consistently. When incidents of children going missing from home occur, staff liaise effectively with other agencies to ensure that children return safely.

Allegations made by children are taken seriously. Managers act quickly to ensure children's safety and investigate concerns promptly as part of a multi-agency response, with a focus on reflection and learning. However, some allegations have not been shared with the regulator as required. A requirement has been raised in relation to this breach.

Positive behaviour is promoted. Staff implement natural consequences that are appropriate and directly linked to incidents. Effective management oversight ensures that consequences are proportionate and the manager provides appropriate challenge where necessary. Rewards are personalised and the new incentive plan is effectively encouraging positive choices that children are fully engaged in. This means that children are helped to reflect and learn.

Staff understand their role in safeguarding children, including processes for raising concerns and whistleblowing. Leaders are proactive in arranging training to upskill staff and refresh their knowledge in safeguarding procedures. As a result, staff feel confident in taking action to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is newly registered, having previously worked as the deputy manager of the home. This transition was smooth and the children speak positively about the manager and staff. During the inspection, trusting relationships between the manager, staff and children were clearly observed.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff benefit from regular supervision and team meetings. These are focused on ensuring that staff understand children's needs and what is expected of them in their roles. Staff value this approach. One member of staff said, 'There is a clear vision and training and understanding leads to continuing development.' In addition, staff feel supported and able to have open discussions. Appraisals are reflective and consider children's feedback and views.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of children's needs and make effective use of the support from the home's therapist to have meaningful discussions with children. One professional said, '[Name of child] has positive relationships with staff members and they understand their needs well.' As a result, children benefit from an experienced and consistent staff team.

Staff are supported by leaders and managers who are visible in the home, and this enables them to work positively and consistently together. The manager has systems in place to monitor staff practice and development and provides staff with suitable support.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. All appropriate checks of candidates take place before they start their employment, which ensures that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) The registered person must ensure that all allegations against a person working in the home are notified to Ofsted.	9 April 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they have up-to-date copies of children's statutory documents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 11.1)

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: 2602585

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Stage 4Life Limited

Registered provider address: 146 Bolton Road, Atherton, Manchester M46 9LF

Responsible individual: Jay Morgan

Registered manager: Lewis Witham

Inspector

Julia Edwards, Social Care Inspector

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