

2724156

Registered provider: New Focus Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

There is a permanent registered manager at the home, who is suitably experienced.

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living at the home. They were present and spent time talking with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 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: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2025	Full	Good
21/02/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide quality and consistent care to children. As a result, they have a good experience living at the home and a real sense of stability.

One child has moved into the home and has settled very well. Managers made a swift decision to reduce their staffing ratio, which has been successful. This has led to a significant area of progress for a child in adjusting to living alongside another child, after a long period of living alone.

Staff are attentive to children and understand children's needs well. They also show a keen interest in children's hobbies and activities. As a result, children have built trusted relationships with staff.

Managers and staff regularly reflect on children's relationships and seek to strengthen these, where necessary. For example, for one child, building relationships with female staff has been more challenging. Managers have sought advice from the home's commissioned therapy team, and staff have begun to successfully implement the strategies to help the child with this.

Staff consult with children and seek their wishes and feelings, helping children to make choices and be involved in planning their care. For example, one child has been consulted about reducing their level of staff supervision. The child was agreeable and able to highlight the benefit of this. Children's views are valued, and staff act on their requests, such as gaining new items for their bedroom or going to the activities or places they choose.

Staff help children to access their education, placing a high priority on this. They take one child to school that is some distance away, but recognise the importance of this stability for the child. The manager escalated a complaint about changes to one child's education package. As a result, interim tutoring was provided. The manager has helped one child to gain a place at college to study mechanics, which has been their aim for a long time. Extensive planning and staff support is in place to maximise their success in this.

Managers and staff recognise how important family relationships are for children. They help children to spend time with those who are important to them and ensure that family time arrangements remain in line with children's wishes.

One child's plans highlight that they are Christian and would like to visit a church. Managers and staff have not been curious to explore this. As a result, they have not had the opportunity to attend church or pursue their interest in religion.

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

Staff know children well and understand their needs and risks. These are set out clearly in children's plans, which provide staff with clear guidance for actions they must take to keep children safe. Plans are frequently reviewed and updated, so that they remain current.

Staff have established clear routines for children, including setting boundaries. Therefore, children usually understand what is expected of them. Staff are attuned and attentive to children's needs; they observe any changes in children's well-being. They act swiftly to de-escalate children's heightened emotions effectively, and use of physical intervention is extremely rare. As a result, children have made considerable progress in self-regulation and managing their emotions.

There are inconsistencies in the management of allegations. Allegations are infrequent and staff generally understand what action to take in this event. However, on one occasion, staff did not recognise and respond to an allegation. Although a manager spoke to the child about the wider incident, they did not directly follow up the allegation made. On other occasions, allegations have been taken seriously and investigated appropriately. Managers have been diligent in discussing the outcome with the child and taking restorative action.

Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of children. However, children are not always helped to take appropriate risks in line with their age and ability. For example, when a child went cycling on a campsite during a holiday, there was insufficient planning to manage this new experience. Staff did not ensure that the child understood the expectation or had the means to know what time to return. As a result, the child did not return at the agreed time and so the manager ended the holiday. This could inhibit the child's progress in developing skills for independence.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager models a very nurturing approach to the care of children. They are present and approachable; staff are confident that they can seek support and advice at any time. They are extremely positive about how well the home is managed and they feel highly supported by the manager; this builds positive morale.

The manager has carried out some developmental work with the staff to ensure that they understand everyone's roles and responsibilities at the home. As a result, staff carry out their assigned duties and the care of children is well organised. The manager is working towards further developing staff autonomy.

There have been some staff changes; however, there is a core staff team who know the children well. Staffing levels are supported by bank staff, occasional agency workers and staff from the provider's other homes. These are usually people who the children are familiar with. Recruitment is ongoing and new staff are on-boarding to fill the remaining

vacancies. Staff are safely and carefully recruited to ensure that they bring the required skills and qualities to the team.

Staff receive relevant training that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge for their roles. Staff development is further enhanced through team meetings. The manager is creative in using a range of approaches and resources to upskill staff in relevant topics, including de-escalation, recording and reporting.

While managers monitor the staff's completion of mandatory training, the oversight has not ensured that all staff have completed this in a timely way. For example, one staff member has several shortfalls in the completion of mandatory training, and this includes safeguarding. This reduces the competence of the workforce.

The manager understands the strengths of the home and has a focus on continual development and improvement. Managers and staff are highly motivated to provide good-quality care and to continue to help children thrive and reach their potential.

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 standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that all staff undertake effective safeguarding training in a timely way. This also relates to managers and staff making realistic decisions about when children are, or are not, at risk. This includes ensuring that children are enabled to take risks in line with their age and abilities. In addition, this relates to all staff consistently following the home's child protection policies to recognise and respond to allegations accordingly.	21 November 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to maintain and develop their cultural or religious beliefs as far as practicable and where appropriate, through participation and instruction, and by observing religious requirements. This includes managers and staff being responsive to children's wishes to explore religion. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.22)

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: 2724156

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: New Focus Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit A4, Dewsbury Road, Fenton Industrial Estate,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2TE

Responsible individual: Amanda Porter

Registered manager: Kerry Walker

Inspector

Alison Snell, Social Care Inspector

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