

2730755

Registered provider: Next Step Independence Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to two children who may have emotional or social difficulties.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 October 2025

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
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 2 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2024	Full	Outstanding
19/09/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of inspection, one child was living at the home and the inspector spoke with them about their time in the home.

The child has made positive progress in key areas, including successfully achieving functional qualifications in English, developing core independent living skills, and increased autonomy by spending time alone at home in preparation for adult life. However, despite staff's consistent support and encouragement the child has started to withdraw from professional support negatively affecting the child's educational outcomes and participation in community activities.

The home is a welcoming and nurturing environment. The atmosphere is warm and homely which promotes comfort and belonging for the child. Nice touches are evident throughout the home, including soft furnishings and personalised décor. A particularly creative feature is the display of staff portraits illustrated as the child's favourite well-known fictional characters, such as movie heroes and animated figures which fosters a sense of fun, familiarity, and connection.

Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preparing the child for adulthood by helping them to learn essential independent living skills. They work proactively to develop the child's confidence and competence in areas such as cleaning, laundry, budgeting and meal preparation. This consistent focus ensures that the child is equipped with the practical knowledge and emotional resilience needed to navigate adult life with greater autonomy. Staff celebrate progress no matter how small and adapt their approach to meet the child's evolving needs and engagement. A parent commented that when their child decides not to engage with staff, 'they keep trying and trying and trying'. Adding, that they felt staff 'are amazing'. Another family member stated that staff have turned the child's life around and they now have hope for the child's future.

Staff listen to the child and actively seek their views to inform and enhance practice. The child is encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings, and staff respond with sensitivity and respect, ensuring that the child feels heard and valued. Through age-appropriate conversations, staff are able to discuss sensitive and delicate issues, build trust and maintain clear and consistent boundaries. This approach promotes the child's emotional wellbeing and supports their ability to make informed choices within a nurturing environment.

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

The child expresses they feel happy and safe living in the home. They have built strong, trusting relationships with staff, who they know well and feel confident to share any concerns or worries with. This supportive environment enables the child to express themselves freely and feel listened to. The consistent presence of caring staff helps the

child to gain a sense of stability and emotional security, which is key to their overall wellbeing and development.

Notably, the child has not been involved in any adverse incidents since November 2023, which is a testament to them and the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures and the consistency of staff practice.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding practices, supported by dynamic risk assessments and a comprehensive behavioural support plan that reflects historical concerns and proactive strategies. Regular testing of staff knowledge and skills ensures they remain confident and competent in responding to safeguarding incidents should they arise. The use of role-play exercises, such as missing person simulations, further reinforces staff preparedness and contributes to a robust safeguarding culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the child.

Leaders and managers consistently apply safe recruitment procedures. This ensures that only individuals who are suitable to work with vulnerable children are appointed. This approach underpins the standards of care and protection provided and contributes to the overall safeguarding culture within the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a caring and child-focused manager who demonstrates an ethos of placing the child at the centre of practice. A fully staffed team who share the manager's vision provide consistency for the child. All staff were overwhelmingly positive about the support from leaders and managers and were proud of the care they provide for the child.

Staff benefit from regular, reflective supervision sessions that prioritises their ability to safeguard the child and their emotional wellbeing. Supervision sessions are purposeful and support staff in understanding the positive impact of their work on the child's life. Staff are encouraged to develop professionally and are provided with opportunities to enhance their skills and progress within their roles.

Leaders and managers work proactively with external agencies and have developed positive and effective working relationships with professionals. The manager and staff listen to the child to obtain their views and wishes, then make sure their voice is heard by advocating on the child's behalf to help ensure that concerns are resolved, and positive outcomes are achieved. A professional commented that staff take the child's welfare and comfort very seriously and do the best they can to help them feel happy and secure.

Feedback from both professionals and family members was consistently positive regarding the quality of care and support provided by staff. They highlighted the team's commitment to meeting the child's individual needs and creating a nurturing environment that promotes wellbeing and development.

No requirements or recommendations have been raised at this inspection.

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: 2730755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Step Independence Limited

Registered provider address: Next Step Independence, Wellington House, Queen Street, Taunton TA1 3UF

Responsible individual: Post Vacant

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Gary Turney, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025