

2751095

Registered provider: Next Chapter Care Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

Three children were living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The home and the manager were registered with Ofsted in December 2023.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2025

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 30 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

All the children have recently moved into the home and are still in the process of settling in. Despite the manager's efforts to obtain case records, there have been delays in receiving one child's care plan from the placing local authority. This has had an impact on getting the child registered with a GP and to have a health plan in place.

Although the children are still new to the home, staff and managers have made considerable efforts to try and build positive relationships with each child. One child's social worker has commended the staff for their dedication in engaging with the child, who typically finds it difficult to engage with adults.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of education for children and work closely with the wider professional network to identify suitable school placements promptly. However, while these efforts are ongoing, staff have not been sufficiently proactive or creative in establishing daily routines to help children prepare for re-engaging with education. One child reported spending most of their day in their bedroom, feeling unproductive and lacking structure.

The home previously experienced a period of stability. However, the new children have moved in without enough consideration being given to their compatibility. Assessments have not adequately accounted for the varying levels of vulnerability between the children or whether their differing needs can be managed safely and effectively.

Children are supported to stay in touch with their family.

Children can take part in a range of activities, including trips to the cinema and attractions, and playing table tennis.

Staff provide children with a clean and welcoming environment. Children's bedrooms are fully furnished to meet all their needs. Books and board games are accessible in communal rooms. There is a well-equipped games room and the garden has facilities for various activities.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff are sometimes hindered in their ability to meet children's needs due to a lack of access to essential information. In particular, some children's risk assessments are missing critical details, which compromises the staff's ability to safeguard them effectively. For example, one child's risk assessment is missing information about their vulnerability to criminal exploitation. For another child, their assessment lacks sufficient detail regarding the local authority's concerns and emerging risks. These gaps mean that

staff do not have clear visibility of key information relating to children's vulnerabilities, limiting their capacity to respond appropriately and keep children safe.

The provider employs a behavioural analyst who visits the home regularly and holds meetings with managers and staff to discuss children's presenting behaviours. These sessions are informative and help to guide practice on an ongoing basis. However, this good practice is not consistently reflected in developing behaviour support plans that staff can refer to when supporting individual children.

When a child goes missing from the home, staff report the child missing to leaders, managers and the wider professional network. However, staff have not been made aware of the local protocol for reporting children missing from care, which includes using an online portal. Although staff have access to grab packs for each child, one child's pack is missing essential information. While return home interviews are offered, the outcomes of these interviews are not always recorded effectively.

Staff carry out key-work sessions with children. Although these are intended to provide support, they do not always address the risks and issues identified in the local authority's plans and risk assessments.

The recording of incidents is inconsistent. While the manager reviews all incidents as they occur, records do not always identify whether a debrief has been carried out as this section has been left blank. This results in missed opportunities to help children and staff reflect on incidents and explore ways to prevent similar incidents happening in the future.

Managers lack sufficient oversight of medication administration, which means there is no assurance that children are consistently receiving their prescribed medication in line with their doctor's instructions.

Safer recruitment practice is good. This prevents unsuitable people from working at the home and helps to promote the children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The responsible individual and registered manager demonstrate a commitment to the care of children and acknowledge that there are some shortfalls, particularly in areas such as record-keeping.

They recognise that the current group of children are still new to the home, and that staff and children are in the early stages of building relationships based on trust and respect.

Staff receive a range of training to support them in caring for children. However, there are gaps, with some staff missing training in key areas such as understanding the risks

of exploitation, serious youth violence and self-harm. Additionally, the training matrix used to track completed training is not kept up to date.

Staff receive regular supervision sessions. These sessions provide all members of staff with the opportunity to discuss the care of the children and their own personal development. However, records often lack details of actions being set to help develop staff practice.

The registered manager has ensured that there is a workforce development plan and statement of purpose in place. However, the development plan is missing some information about staff experience, induction and supervision timescales.

Leaders and managers do not always have sufficient oversight of staff practice, in particular, of record-keeping. This creates a missed opportunity to help them to fully assess the standards of practice in the home.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— Understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ix)) In particular, staff must ensure that routines are in place for children.	10 September 2025
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii))	10 September 2025

In particular, ensure that: ■ all children have risk assessments that take into account all their individual vulnerabilities ■ behaviour support plans are in place for all children ■ children’s debriefings after incidents are recorded.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that: ■ there are detailed assessments that help to ensure that the differing needs of children can be safely met ■ key-work sessions with children help them understand their experiences and risks.	10 September 2025
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the missing child policy”) setting out— the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; and the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent. (Regulation 34 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are missing-from-home protocols for all children and all missing-from-home records include details about return home interviews.	10 September 2025

The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	10 September 2025
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they challenge the local authority when it does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the workforce development plan includes the necessary information about staff experience and outlines induction and supervision timescales. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that all supervision takes into account action points set at the end of supervision sessions and review these actions before the next supervision session takes place. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are appropriately trained and maintain the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage the administration of medication in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.15)

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: 2751095

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Next Chapter Care Group

Registered provider address: 17 Carlton Terrance, Great Cambridge Road, London N18 1LB

Responsible individual: James Borland

Registered manager: Shumail Mahmood

Inspector

Ruth Okezie, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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