

SC399586

Registered provider: First 4 Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children who may have learning disabilities and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are currently two children living at the home. The home is run by a private company.

The registered manager left in May 2021. A new manager has been appointed but has only been in post a week at the time of this inspection.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 August 2021

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2020	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Good
15/11/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children living at this home are totally dependent on their caregivers and need 'round the clock supervision.' The care provided is individualised, and staff respond well to the specific learning needs and vulnerabilities of the children. As a result, children feel secure and comfortable in their surroundings.

One child lived at the home for over seven years and during this time formed close attachments with staff. The staff went to great lengths to promote the successful transition of this child into supported adult accommodation. Two members of staff have continued to provide continuity of care and support that enables this young adult to live independently.

The children are making steady progress in many areas of their lives while acknowledging their significant learning needs. They are thriving and enjoy good physical health. This is due to the consistency of care, good routines, and an active and healthy lifestyle.

Staff support the children in every aspect, ensuring their physical and emotional needs are met. Staff advocate for the children and give them a range of experiences, from going to the park, on day trips to the seaside, baking, reading and arts and crafts. Children's views, wishes and feelings are creatively captured by staff and this informs how they spend their time on a day-to-day basis.

Transitions into and out of the home are well managed and facilitated at the child's pace. Careful and thorough matching and attention to detail promote the chance of a placement in this home being effective and sustainable. Feedback from parents and the social worker has given credit to the successful matching of the two children who have developed a peer-on-peer friendship for the first time.

Managers and staff recognise the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships with family and offer high levels of support and supervision. This promotes a sense of stability and belonging for children and makes them feel emotionally safer.

Children's progress that leads to sustained outcomes is achieved by being consistent and repetitive. It is a small-steps approach but ultimately it gives the children the best chance of achieving more independence in their ability to make choices and in their personal care.

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

Risks to the children are well understood and recorded. Staff understand each of the children's specific vulnerabilities and behaviours that would place them at risk of

harm. One child is protected by a deprivation of liberty order and through this it safely enhances his freedom of movement both in the home and in the community.

Each child has their own individual risk assessment, positive handling and behaviour management plan. This provides clear direction to staff about how to reduce the risk of harm, to avoid hazards and better protect the children.

Staff are trained to recognise and understand risk, manage behaviour and promote children's safety. They work collaboratively with health and social care workers to ensure the care they deliver benefits the children. Staff establish consistent boundaries and routines and use a positive handling approach. This means there has not been a need to physically intervene to manage behaviour.

Staff interventions with the children are having a positive impact and incidents of self-injurious behaviour have reduced. Children are given positive praise and lots of encouragement. This approach helps the children to self-regulate their behaviour and they are less likely to become agitated and distressed.

Children, by their presentation and demeanour, appear comfortable and relaxed in the home. This is evidenced through their settled sleep routines and through their interactions with each other and with staff.

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

During the inspection, the inspector identified shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home. The lack of managerial oversight has resulted in staff not receiving regular supervision. In particular, new staff and staff rotas are not done with sufficient notice. Senior managers are aware of this and are beginning to address these issues.

Sufficiency of staff was seen as an area of concern. This has been partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in staff absence and sickness. On occasion, this has had an impact on the level of care afforded to the children. This could have resulted in children coming to harm through a lack of appropriate one-to-one supervision. More attention to staff rotas and the use of agency staff has mitigated the risk of this happening in the future.

The home has been without a manager since May 2021. This has had an impact on staff morale. Some staff have not felt listened to in relation to working long hours and rotas being done at short notice. This could impact on staff retention and children receiving care from people who they are not familiar with.

A new manager has been appointed and is currently progressing her registration. This has been welcomed by the staff. More recently, the area manager has been a source of managerial cover and support alongside the appointment of an interim deputy manager. This has provided some reassurance to staff that their concerns are now being listened to.

Significant incidents relating to the children seldom happen. This is because staff know the children well and understand their complex needs. However, a recent incident that caused disruption and distress to the children resulted in staff feeling upset and traumatised. Staff involved were not debriefed following this incident and this left them feeling unsupported.

Managers and staff are dedicated and ambitious for the children, both when they are in the home and once they have left the home. They work with professionals and families to ensure the care provided is bespoke and addresses specifically the needs of each individual child.

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, 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))	24 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and	24 September 2021

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. Staff supervision must enable staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. The registered person should ensure that staff are debriefed following a significant incident. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards', pages 53 and 39, paragraphs 10.11 and 8.15)

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: SC399586

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: First 4 Care Limited

Registered provider address: 16 St. Wilfrids Road, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 6AA

Responsible individual: Carolann Dodds

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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