

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 or young people who have a learning disability and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 November 2017

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: 14 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The manager and staff know the children and young people's needs very well, provide nurturing care and take an active interest in their well-being.

- The children and young people have excellent school attendance and staff work closely with their schoolteachers.
- The staff use a range of communication techniques and one young person's speech has improved.
- The children and young people benefit from living in a stable, homely environment with consistent routines and boundaries.
- The manager and staff work in close partnership with families and other professionals to ensure that there is consistency of care across different settings.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The fire door in one young person's bedroom needs repairing so that it complies with fire regulations.
- A young person who lived at the home for many years was not provided with a memory book to provide them with photographs of their experiences of living there.
- The staff are not consistent when offering positive consequences for children and young people's achievements.
- The manager does not know if the independent visitor has the necessary skills and experience to complete the monthly visits. This visitor also does not provide an opinion as to whether the children and young people's well-being is being promoted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/08/2016	Full	Good
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home, the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25(2)(b)) In particular, this relates to seeking advice to repair one young person's bedroom door to ensure that it complies with fire regulations.	15/01/2018
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4))	15/01/2018

Recommendations

- The importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life story work or other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

In particular, to keep a memory book of the time that young people stay at the home.

- Staff should understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognise when children have managed situations well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.39)

Specifically, to review the existing system to make sure that the staff are more

consistent when rewarding positive behaviour to encourage the children and young people to meet their targets.

- The skills, experience and professional background of the independent person, for example in undertaking work of a similar nature, will also be a relevant factor in assessing their ability to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 66, paragraph 15.9)

In particular, ascertain the experience of the independent visitor to ensure that the visitor has the necessary skills to complete the monthly visits.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people who have lived at the home for many years make steady and continuous progress. They receive nurturing care from the stable staff team, which offers them security and stability. This is particularly important for those children and young people who struggle with change. The manager and staff provide young people with high levels of support, understand their needs exceptionally well and take an active interest in their well-being. This is essential when looking at new referrals to this small and comfortable home. Excellent matching and a carefully planned transition have resulted in a child successfully moving into the home with limited disruption to the other young person. A staff member said: '[Name of child] has settled in really well. He slept from the second night onwards, and there are practically no incidents.'

The children and young people have 100% attendance at school and are making steady progress. They are assisted by staff who encourage their reading and writing skills. The staff team has developed a good relationship with the children and young people's schoolteachers, which helps with information sharing. The staff from the home visit the school. This is important to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across both settings, particularly in respect of communication and behaviour management. An education professional said that they find the staff 'exemplary' and said: 'There is always someone on hand if needed and staff will attend the school at the drop of a hat.'

The children and young people are assisted with communicating their needs through a range of media taking into consideration their age and understanding. Visual aids such as pictures and 'here and now' boards are used. These help to explain a child's daily activities. One young person's speech has greatly improved as a result of the support provided by staff.

The staff understand the importance of children and young people maintaining links with their family. Parents are regularly consulted about their children's care. This is particularly important as it ensures that care is provided in line with a child or young person's religious and cultural beliefs. Staff work in partnership with parents to make family conduct as productive as possible, and, if appropriate, parents can visit the home. The children and young people have photographs of family at the home, which gives

them a strong sense of identity and maintains important links.

The children and young people live in a stable home environment which has been personalised and reflects their individual interests. The children and young people benefit from consistent care, boundaries and routines, helping them develop a sense of belonging at the home. Some children and young people who have left the home return to spend time with staff with whom they developed trusting relationships. This provides those children and young people with emotional support and continued relationships with peers living at the home.

The young people develop daily living skills to enable them to live in semi-independent accommodation as adults. This extends to learning how to manage their emotions and angry outbursts. One young person has made significant progress in caring for themselves, including passing their driving theory test, studying at college and being able to self-medicate. This has given the young person control over their life and provided them with an improved future as an adult. When young people leave, staff do not collate photographs and give them a memory book. This would provide an important visual account of the time they spent living at the home to help them understand their past when they are adults.

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

The children and young people have high levels of support and supervision due to their learning disability. The staff keep them safe and protected in the home and in the community. The children and young people are not at risk of exploitation and do not go missing from home. The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding, particularly related to children and young people with learning disabilities. This protects those with additional vulnerabilities.

The children and young people's individual plans give the staff guidance on how to manage challenging behaviours, such as nipping and biting. Staff understand the children and young people's sensory needs. For one child, the consistent approach of the staff and the introduction of sensory toys have led to a reduction in aggressive outbursts. A professional said: 'I am not seeing as much challenging behaviour from [name of child] and the instances of biting, scratching and nipping have reduced.'

Staff know the children and young people well and can intervene quickly to stop any negative behaviours. There have been no restraints at the home. Some staff have recently attended training in relation to children who have an autistic spectrum disorder. This will update their knowledge and understanding of caring for children and young people with this condition.

The children and young people living at the home do not understand the concept of sanctions. There is a process for recording positive and negative consequences that is linked to children and young people's behaviour. Staff do not consistently follow this system and rewards are not linked to targets. This would help the children and young people recognise when they have made progress or acted appropriately.

Fire drills are regularly completed. However, one bedroom door needs to be repaired as the young person daily removes the fire strip. This removes the extra protection barrier that is necessary to stop a fire spreading quickly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since 2016 and has worked in residential care for many years. She has the necessary skills and experience to run the home. She has almost completed her level 5 management qualification. The manager is a committed and passionate leader with vision as to how the home will develop. Improvements to systems, such as the introduction of key-worker sessions and individualised risk assessments, provide staff with guidance and strategies. The manager spends time observing staff's practice to ensure that the children and young people receive consistent and safe care.

The staff receive good induction and training to prepare them for working in the home. Regular supervision and team meetings promote staff's professional development. When staff identify a shortfall in their understanding, additional training is provided, such as autism spectrum disorder awareness training. This keeps their knowledge up to date so that they continue to meet the complex needs of the children and young people.

The manager is passionate about ensuring that the children and young people receive the best possible care. This filters down to the staff team, which also wants the best outcomes for the children and young people. Staff are aware of whistleblowing procedures and are confident about raising any practice issues with leaders and managers. This is important for those children and young people who have no verbal communication.

The manager and staff work in close partnership with families and other professionals. They have developed good links with the schools that the children and young people attend.

The manager completes a detailed and evaluative six-monthly review that reflects the quality of care provided to the children and young people. A monitoring visit takes place monthly by an independent person who fails to offer an opinion about whether the home is promoting the children and young people's well-being. The manager lacks information about the independent visitor. It is unclear whether the visitor has the necessary skills, experience and professional background to be able to make a rigorous and impartial judgement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their

families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 313 Goodison Boulevard, Doncaster DN4 6TP

Responsible individual: Carolann Dodds

Registered manager: Samantha Miller

Inspector

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector

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