

# 1185828

Registered provider: Next Stage 4 Life

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a small private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities.

**Inspection dates:** 10 to 11 July 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                      outstanding

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

**Date of last inspection:** 13 March 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:

- Young people make very good progress from their starting points, in particular with regard to their emotional and behavioural development.
- Young people view this as their home and are very settled living here.
- The registered manager is inspirational and ambitious in striving to make a positive difference to young people.
- Professionals are highly complimentary of the service provided to young people.
- Young people are gaining new experiences that are building their confidence and self-esteem. For example, having their short story published in a book and excelling at go-kart racing.
- Young people's views influence the running of the home and the staff champion their rights effectively.
- There are very good relationships between staff and young people. Young people feel safe and secure.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2016	Full	Good

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

There are no statutory requirements as a result of this inspection.

### Recommendations

- Ensure that progress in education is measured and evidenced in various ways, including but not limited to: success in academic, vocational and other awards and qualifications; other formal attainment tests that are part of national assessment arrangements; and teachers' ongoing assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people living at this home experience a nurturing and homely environment. A young person commented, 'I want to stay here until I am 18 and beyond.' This is a huge improvement for this young person, who has struggled to settle in previous placements.

Warm and caring relationships between the staff and young people are evident. This is the bedrock of the continued progress that young people make. Young people ask staff for hugs to say goodbye when they are going out on an activity and laugh and joke with each other over mealtimes. It is clear that they are building strong bonds with the staff and are feeling safe and secure.

Young people are attending school regularly and achieving their targets. Although progress is made, the staff have had difficulty gaining educational achievement data from the school for each young person to reflect this. Young people are warmly welcomed home after their day at school and eagerly chat about what they have been doing. They receive awards from the school for their progress and staff praise them highly. The staff attend school meetings and provide equipment, such as computers and books to encourage further learning and success.

The staff ensure that young people enjoy good health. They are registered with appropriate healthcare services and attend all appointments. Marked improvements are evident in young people's self-care skills and appearance. A clinical psychologist provides regular therapy directly to young people to address identified emotional needs. The psychologist also guides the staff team in their care practice with young people to ensure that it is responsive to their particular need. The staff successfully encouraged one young person to have a blood test, demonstrating the trusting relationships between them.

Young people participate in a range of social and recreational activities, including football, swimming, basketball, gymnasium, cinema and bowling. One young person has

recently had her short story published and another young person is excelling at go-kart racing. These are fine examples of them having positive experiences and growing in confidence.

Young people's rights and views are central to care practice and are well understood by the staff. Young people's views are regularly gained through various channels, including an independent advocate who regularly visits young people, meetings with the staff and also a monthly meeting with the manager. Issues raised by young people are promptly acted upon, such as purchasing a car racing helmet and changing a wardrobe in a bedroom.

The staff fully support young people to stay in touch with their families and to have a good understanding of their background history and relationships. They work proactively with parents and professionals to ensure that contact arrangements are safe and enjoyable. Notably, the staff have championed young people's rights with the placing authority to have set contact plans in place so that young people can have routine and structure.

Since the last inspection, two young people have left the home. Excellent care planning and life story work for each young person enabled a smooth transition.

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

The safety and protection of young people living at this home are at the heart of care practice. Young people say that they feel safe and secure. Moreover, risks are well understood by the staff and effective planning with professionals helps to minimise risks and vulnerabilities for young people. As a result, incidents of young people going missing are significantly reduced making them safer.

The staff fully understand young people's needs and have care plans to guide them in addressing any challenging behaviour in a consistent and positive way. As a result, physical restraints are reducing. These are well monitored by the registered manager, who ensures that they are appropriate. Furthermore, all the staff are trained in a certified method of physical intervention to safely hold young people.

There are no complaints or serious incidents since the last inspection. Young people and their families are encouraged to raise their ideas or complaints through various ways, such as feedback questionnaires, telephone or face-to-face. They have a trusted adult to confide in with whom they can raise any worries or concerns. Complaints are welcomed by the staff and any learning that arises as a result is used to improve practice.

The staff have regular quality training in safeguarding and have a good understanding of how to protect young people. Safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures provide guidance to staff on their responsibilities to ensure that young people are protected from harm. The staff are clear about their duties to protect young people. These measures complement the culture of safety and protection in the home.

Young people live in a physically safe environment where they are protected by well-managed health and safety procedures. Trained experts assess and review fire safety and health and safety matters. Plans are in place to evacuate young people in an emergency.

The staff are recruited and selected through a process that takes account of safer recruitment practice to promote the safety of young people. This includes checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and references from previous employers and continued monitoring by the registered manager. This helps to guard against unsafe adults working here.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

This is an exceptionally well-led home. The experienced and qualified registered manager is supported by a deputy manager. Together they inspire a strong and visible child-centred culture. The staff are complimentary of the management team. A member of staff commented, 'They are brilliant and supportive and lead by example.' The management team clearly motivates the staff. This means that young people are well supported by a stable, consistent and committed staff team.

There is a strong emphasis on promoting and improving the standards already achieved here. The registered manager confidently strives to improve the service and her own practice. Effective systems are in place to monitor the quality of care that young people receive and new ideas are encouraged by her from all those involved in the service. The recommendation from the last inspection has been addressed and risk assessments now contain a detailed chronology of emerging information.

The staff work proactively with partner agencies to secure positive outcomes for young people. Partner agencies report that there are effective and transparent relationships and that they are confident that young people are receiving a good quality of care. They are highly complimentary of the service provided to the whole family. A social worker commented, 'I can't fault it. It is brilliant. They don't give up despite the challenges.' Another professional said, 'I wish more staff were like this. They are a breath of fresh air in gaining young people's views.'

The staff have an excellent approach to their work. They work to the principles and ethos of the statement of purpose and provide a warm, nurturing, calm, supportive and homely environment. In line with the aims of the home, all staff strive to ensure that young people's views and opinions are central to the operation of the home.

The staff have comprehensive guidance, policies and procedures to support their care practice. They also have regular training, supervisions, appraisals and team meetings to further ensure their competence in delivering a high standard of care. The staff are suitably qualified or working towards this. There are sufficient numbers of staff with the right skills and experience to meet young people's needs.

The home's written records are excellent and provide a picture of young people's daily

living. Furthermore, they capture each young person's journey, progress and time spent during their time here through life story work. These are filled with photographs of young people enjoying life and are meaningful memories for them to look back on. Their information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

## **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:** 1185828

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Next Stage 4 Life

**Registered provider address:** Next Stage, 28 Manchester Road, Westhoughton, Bolton BL5 3QJ

**Responsible individual:** Richard Guy

**Registered manager:** Jade Parry

## Inspector

Caroline Jones: social care inspector

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