

SC484402

Registered provider: Footsteps to Futures Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home is registered to provide care for up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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: 23 to 24 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 10 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/09/2019	Full	Good
13/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/04/2018	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: Outstanding

Children are receiving exceptional standards of care from a dedicated team that knows them extremely well. There is a real sense of emotional warmth and understanding shown to the children. This enables them to build trusting relationships with staff. Clear boundaries are negotiated with children, which help them feel safe and secure. Children are making excellent progress because of the nurturing environment in the home.

Children enjoy living at the home. They have fun with the staff and can also talk to them about the most sensitive of issues. Their individual needs are consistently met in imaginative and innovative ways. A particular strength is helping children to understand issues around safe sex and sexuality. Children are treated with dignity and respect in terms of their unique experiences and identities.

Children feel relaxed and part of a family quite soon after moving in. They are encouraged to express their personalities and explore their interests, enabling them to have new and exciting experiences. Children have access to psychological support within the company. The psychologist also works with the staff to identify trauma-informed strategies and approaches to use in their direct work with children. The theoretical approach that underpins the team's work is apparent in all aspects of their work with the children.

Great care and consideration are given to the planning for children moving into or out of the home. The manager visits each child to talk about moving into the home, providing opportunities for any worries or anxieties to be explored before a final decision is made. Consequently, children settle well into the home and feel welcomed and accepted.

Where children have moved on from the home in difficult circumstances, staff have shown a high level of commitment to providing positive endings. They have supported children to move to new homes, sometimes travelling long distances and working hard to involve key people. This helps to reduce the impact of the change for the child and makes them feel valued. Children keep in touch when they move on, which demonstrates the significance of the home in their lives.

All children are making outstanding progress with their health. The staff proactively address general health needs, and children feel able to discuss more personal issues such as sexual health and contraception. One child has made a significant reduction in smoking and using substances, which will have lifelong health benefits.

Staff and managers place great value on education. Children who have not previously attended education are now receiving formal teaching at school or with an individual tutor. Staff do not give up on children who are struggling, and they

look for different ways to help the child re-engage, for example, by offering incentives, home tutoring or access to smaller education settings.

Professionals have every confidence in the home. They described the care offered as 'impeccable' and 'excellent'. The staff work tenaciously for children within the wider professional networks, influencing decision-making and challenging shortfalls where needed. Consequently, the child's voice remains central in their care planning.

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

Staff understand the risks posed to and from children well. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of the children's past experiences and trauma. Staff implement thorough risk assessments and plans, often demonstrating forward thinking in terms of how and when risks might escalate. Over time, this is leading to reduced risks for children, and they become safer.

Staff follow missing-from-care procedures meticulously when children go missing from the home. They understand and act on any concerns relating to child exploitation, bullying or other forms of abuse. They work closely with involved agencies to review and update risk assessments and plans. Children said that staff keep them safe and can identify clear examples of times when they have been helped.

Positive use of behaviour-management strategies minimises the use of physical intervention. Staff help children to understand and manage their own behaviours. There is emphasis on trauma-informed approaches, which de-escalate situations of potential conflict effectively. Children understand the rules and boundaries and the reasons for them. Where children are becoming more independent, staff support them to take well-managed, age-appropriate decisions. This includes spending time away from the home without supervision. This approach reflects the commitment of staff in preparing children for the future.

There are robust recruitment processes in place to ensure that children are cared for by safe adults. The staff are clear about their safeguarding roles and responsibilities, with support from management oversight. There are good links with the designated officer, police and other relevant agencies. This ensures transparency when managing safeguarding issues.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: Outstanding

The home is led by highly confident and competent managers. They are ambitious for children and strive for the best outcomes in all areas of their lives. They are influential in the decision-making about children and change the lives of children who have experienced significant trauma. They have created a strong family ethos, which is valued by the children and staff.

Managers have exceptional knowledge of the children's experiences and trauma. This, together with their professional skills and experience, has established a strong foundation from which the staff team provides such a high standard of care.

The staff are thriving in a supportive and homely environment. They have continual professional development, including bespoke training provided by a specialist internal learning and development manager. As a result, the care provided is grounded in theory, enabling children with complex needs to be cared for in ways that are evidenced based. The team benefits from excellent managerial and clinical supervision at which they feel able to discuss the impact of their work.

The manager has an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager oversees the work of the staff, using internal and external auditing. This activity, along with the oversight of practice, highlights any actions that need to be addressed. Managers take swift and decisive action where there are shortfalls in practice. An example is a new recording system, which ensures increased levels of accountability relating to key safeguarding procedures. These approaches ensure sustained high levels of care for children.

The managers have not used agency workers for a sustained period even during the pandemic restrictions. Gaps in staffing are covered by bank staff whom the children know or existing staff members. This ensures consistency of care.

Children are fully included in the care and support they receive. Staff and managers regularly seek their views, wishes and feelings. Managers encourage children to read and comment on their records. They act on what children say. Children's lives have been improved significantly due to the support they receive.

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: SC484402

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Footsteps to Futures Limited

Registered provider address: Chesterfield House, 1 Station Street, Bingham, Nottingham NG13 8AQ

Responsible individual: Donna Francis

Registered manager: Gerald Gordon

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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