

1244493

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2018.

Inspection dates: 31 July to 1 August 2018

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: 20 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/07/2017	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(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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, ensure that any risks to an asthmatic child's health are carefully risk assessed. Ensure also that arrangements for medication administration, such as inhalers, are based on advice from medical practitioners.	07/09/2018
A person may only manage a children's home if— the person is of integrity and good character; having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children— the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children; and the person is physically and mentally fit to manage the home; and	07/09/2018

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the person in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b)(i), a person has the appropriate experience and qualification if the person has— within the last 5 years, worked for at least 2 years in a position relevant to the residential care of children; worked for at least one year in a role requiring the supervision and management of staff working in a care role; and by the relevant date, attained— the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 5 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of a person who starts managing a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 3 years after the date on which that person started managing a home; or in the case of a person who was managing a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2017. The registered provider may defer the relevant date if the person— does not manage, or has not managed, a home for a prolonged period; or manages, or has managed, a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(3)(a)(b) and (4)(a)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	07/09/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home’s

location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

- Staff should have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving and responding to the children they care for. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10) In particular, ensure that staff plan key-work sessions that enable young people to work on their individual areas of need.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are very well supported and the care that they receive is making a positive difference to their lives. Staff work tirelessly to improve the experiences and progress of young people, irrespective of the challenges they may present. Young people have built trusted and secure relationships with the adults who are looking after them.

Consequently, they develop a sense of belonging and permanence. One young person said: 'I like it here, it's a nice home and the staff are nice.' A professional said: 'They are fantastic... We're having some really positive outcomes... They seem to turn young people around quickly.'

Young people's safety and emotional well-being are at the centre of staff practice. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs. Good-quality care means that young people experience effective help and support that is sensitive and responsive to their identity, ethnicity, faith and sexual orientation. Young people are treated with dignity and respect.

Staff are ambitious for young people to attend and do well in their education. Previous engagement in education has been very challenging for some young people, but staff are proactive in encouraging them to re-engage in their education. There are times when a young person's past experiences and present needs impact on their participation and engagement. Staff work effectively with education staff to overcome any barriers to learning and assist young people to re-engage in their education.

Staff ensure that young people are healthy, and that individuals access appropriate medical advice and support. Medication is stored securely. However, it is not clear how often medication should be administered for one young person. For example, their health care plan states 'as and when required', but the medication record sheet states 'daily'. Therefore, it is unclear if the young person is taking their medication in line with the prescriber's instructions.

The home has very recently commissioned the services of a clinical psychologist. They will be available to provide advice and support regarding emotional and behavioural issues affecting individual young people.

Staff provide a warm, homely environment. There has been some damage caused by a

few young people who have displayed aggressive behaviour. However, the manager has ensured that any damage has been repaired promptly. This means that young people continue to live in a home that is decorated and furnished to a good standard.

Staff provide young people with the opportunity to take part in a range of activities in their local community. They enjoy swimming, go-karting, visiting places of interest and football. Most young people also enjoy spending time with their friends. The young people are looking forward to going away together for a summer holiday.

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

The home's location risk assessment identifies potential risks within the local area, including the motorway bridge. However, it is not clear what response is required by staff to minimise the risk of the bridge. To date, this has not impacted negatively on young people.

Staff manage risks well, but not all risks are clearly identified in young people's plans, for example the risks to an asthmatic young person not taking their rescue medication with them when they are spending time away from the home. Furthermore, the home has not considered the potential risks of physical intervention to asthmatic young people. Again, this has not impacted negatively on young people.

Young people confirmed that staff listen to them and that they can talk to staff about any worries. The manager takes prompt action when they are concerned about a young person's welfare and safety, including notifying Ofsted. They will request a placement review with the placing authority and, if deemed necessary, will serve notice on the placement. There is ongoing work with young people regarding their safety when they meet friends who may be unknown to staff. This promotes young people's safety and well-being.

Young people rarely go missing from the home. Should this happen, staff follow agreed missing from care protocols. Staff attempt to maintain phone contact with those who are unsupervised in the community, and search for them if they fail to return on time, reporting them to the police. This promotes their swift, safe return.

Positive behaviour management strategies effectively reduce the levels of challenging behaviour. Restraint is rarely used and only to prevent harm to the young person or others. Staff use individualised incentive schemes and rewards to help young people achieve daily goals, such as engaging with education. Incidents of challenging behaviour overall are decreasing for young people. The use of sanctions is kept to a minimum as behaviour management focuses on negotiation and compromise. Consequently, young people learn to manage their anger and frustrations better.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is very well led by an experienced manager. He has created a culture of high aspiration and positivity that is improving the lives of young people. Prior to managing

this home, he had managed another home for more than two years. Despite this, he does not hold a suitable management qualification.

The manager and staff work proactively and positively with other agencies to ensure that young people receive the right help and support. The manager has a clear understanding of the progress that young people make and can demonstrate the positive impact that living at the home is having on young people's progress and life chances.

The home is adequately resourced and meets the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose. There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the needs of the young people. Any shortfalls in the rota are covered by the staff team or a small pool of bank staff. This ensures continuity of care for young people.

An experienced and knowledgeable staff team cares for young people. Currently, four of the nine staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification. Four staff are also working towards achieving this. Practice is supported by effective training which ensures that young people are cared for by a competent staff team. That said, supervision records do not demonstrate that staff are receiving regular practice-led supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose.

Professionals spoken with during the inspection commented on the effective communication between them and the home. Young people are cared for in line with their care plans. All staff work cohesively to promote improved outcomes for young people. The views, wishes and opinions of young people are important to the staff, and there is some evidence of planned key-work being undertaken with them. However, the majority of work undertaken with young people is done in an informal manner. This potentially limits the young people's ability to be involved in key decisions and influence their care.

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: 1244493

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 139-143 Union Street, Oldham OL1 1TE

Responsible individual: Ahtesham-UI Haque

Registered manager: Ali Sajjad

Inspector

Michelle Bacon: social care inspector

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