

1271182

Registered provider: Step Up Children and Family Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private provider and provides care for up to 5 children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2025	Full	Good
05/12/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2022	Full	Good
01/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were 4 children living at the home. All children have been living at the home since the last inspection and are making very good progress. One child is due to progress on to supported accommodation in line with their pathway plan. They have been well prepared for the move by the manager and staff. One child is due to stay in the home longer than originally planned due to awaiting specific therapeutic input.

Children make very good progress at this home. They benefit from a warm, nurturing and positive environment. Staff know the children very well. Children are cared for by consistent staff who use a therapeutic approach. Staff respond to children in a playful and empathetic way that helps children to make progress.

A family coordinator and a counsellor bring additional resources to the staff team. The family coordinator strengthens relationships between the home staff and children's parents and works to encourage parents' engagement with local authorities. They have also provided bespoke support to children during particularly difficult circumstances.

Children spend time with family members, which is well organised and supports their overall wellbeing. External therapeutic consultation and support are provided to help staff to understand the impact of trauma on children's lives and to support staff's emotional wellbeing.

Children are supported in education at local mainstream schools, colleges and alternative provision. Engagement in education is very good. The manager and senior staff consistently communicate with other professionals regarding plans for education. They strongly advocate for children to ensure that the provision is meeting the children's needs. Feedback from children's schools was highly positive. One professional said, 'The home shows a very keen interest in the child's education; they also encourage parental input with the staff and the child's grandparent coming to parents' evening.'

Staff are creative in offering children opportunities to explore their individual interests. There are lots of activities, celebrations and time spent together. Photographs are captured in yearly photograph albums and are displayed around the home. One child attended their school prom. Photographs of the day have captured this special time. These opportunities help children to create positive memories.

The home has undergone significant improvements; a beautiful new kitchen has now been fitted and a luxurious bathroom for children, which they enjoy using. Plans for further decoration and upgrades are in place. A large, enclosed garden allows children to spend time outside in the warmer months.

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

Children's behaviour is extremely settled in the home. There have been no restraints or missing episodes since the last inspection. Incidents are rare and, as a result, the home is extremely calm.

Staff praise children when they have made positive choices. They use a range of age-appropriate rewards that help children to build self-esteem and confidence. On the occasions when consequences have been used, they have been well considered. This means that children are more likely to learn from mistakes and make better choices.

Strong safeguarding measures are in place regarding access to social media and the internet. Individual plans are in place to help children to access the online world in a safe way. Plans are kept under review, and any changes are discussed with professionals to ensure appropriate decision-making. 'Wi-Fi free Wednesdays' have been introduced, which allow children to spend time away from technology, encouraging board games and watching films together. One child was able to identify their own strategy of keeping safe online and allowing staff to identify any concerns quickly.

Staff know the children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans are detailed and individualised, helping staff to respond appropriately. Staff update plans and assessments regularly. Information, including plans and meeting minutes from the local authority, about children is on file. This ensures that the most up-to-date information is known about the children.

The manager has not always ensured that recruitment checks for new staff are sufficiently thorough. One member of bank staff was working shifts as and when required. However, their Disclosure and Barring Service check was completed some years ago by another employer and they were not on the update service. This did not allow the manager to be assured that they were safe and suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager, responsible individual and director all remain in post and have done for a considerable amount of time. The staff team and children benefit from a very consistent leadership and management team.

The dedicated manager is highly experienced and qualified in working with children. They demonstrate a commitment to meeting children's needs and improving lives. Seniors and specialist staff support the manager very well, and all hold different responsibilities at the home. The staff team is dedicated and offer consistent care to the children. There is no use of agency staff. The responsible individual and director are readily available to assist and advise staff.

Staff speak positively about the support from the manager. Staff feel able to have open

discussions with them. They have regular supervision sessions, which they say are helpful and supportive. Staff highlight a strong culture of teamwork. There is comprehensive training, which staff say helps them to build the necessary skills to work with children in the home.

Professionals and other agencies regard the manager as effective and efficient. This is because the manager has developed positive working relationships with other agencies that are involved in supporting the children. The manager works openly and transparently with other professionals to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time. The manager confidently provides challenge or escalates concerns to ensure that children's needs are met.

Two staff members recently left the home, and support was provided in an attempt to ensure that there was no impact on the children. However, one child expressed sadness that there was not a proper goodbye from a staff member who they had developed a positive relationship with.

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, The 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	4 March 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should respond to children's views about changes to staff and be aware of the potential impact this may have for the child's stability and emotional wellbeing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.12)

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: 1271182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step Up Children and Family Services Ltd

Registered provider address: 742 New Hey Road, Huddersfield HD3 3YQ

Responsible individual: Stephen Graley

Registered manager: Megan Warden

Inspector:

Emily Stevens, Social Care Inspector

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