

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 five 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: 28 and 29 January 2025

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: 5 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2022	Full	Good
01/11/2021	Full	Good
04/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, no children have moved in or out of the home. All children took part in the inspection.

Staff care about the children and have a nurturing approach. This helps children to build positive and respectful relationships with staff. Staff provide children with a sense of safety and stability by offering predictable daily routines.

Children are supported to develop their independence skills. Children learn how to cook meals, budget for grocery shopping, and develop life skills, such as doing their laundry and changing their bed linen.

Children are provided with a range of activities, giving them the opportunity to try new things and continue experiences that are meaningful to them. These have included attending cadets, golf lessons, joining a boxing gym and ice skating. All the children have been on a two-week summer holiday. This created special memories and exciting new experiences for them.

Children continue to maintain good attendance in education, which encourages opportunities for learning. Children's individual achievements are recognised and celebrated. The staff have good links with education providers.

Children are supported to spend time with the people who are important to them. The provider has a member of staff employed specifically as a family coordinator. The children and parents benefit from the support that this role provides. One child sees their family at set times annually. They are provided with updates throughout the year, which allows the time they spend together to be of meaningful quality. One social worker referred to the support provided in this area as 'brilliant'.

Staff create an environment that is homely. Children's rooms are personalised. There are photos of the children and staff displayed throughout, which supports children's sense of belonging. However, some areas in the home have not received the required refurbishment or repair in a timely manner.

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

Children are settled and happy. They respond well to predictable routines and clear expectations. There are few incidents, and children do not go missing from the home. All children said that they could speak to any staff member if they were worried or needed to raise a complaint.

Leaders and managers work with relevant professionals to manage safeguarding incidents. External professionals say when incidents occur. They are thoroughly and promptly explored and communicated well.

Leaders and managers have ensured that responses to incidents are child centred. Calm responses have helped to provide stability for the children. For one child, this means that they can do their exams before moving out in a planned way. This careful planning and flexible approach mean that this child will be able to have a positive ending at the home.

Staff have knowledge of online safety and monitor children's use of internet devices. Staff respond well to safety concerns, including escalating them to the relevant professionals and having transparent and supportive conversations with children.

When consequences are used in the home, these are relatable and directly correlate to the behaviour to help children learn from it. However, one child had his computer removed without clear explanation or timeframes on how he could earn this back. In addition, the effectiveness and proportionality of consequences are not always sufficiently recorded, limiting the potential for the records to aid monitoring and reviews.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a permanent and registered manager. The manager has high aspirations for children. Staff are knowledgeable about the children they care for. The manager and staff have created an environment that is welcoming and warm and where children are spoken about with care and compassion.

Leaders and managers understand the children's needs and have ensured that there are clear plans in place for them. Children's plans are individual to them, and the manager regularly reviews them to ensure that they meet children's needs. These plans help staff to work consistently with children, helping children to feel supported and valued.

The manager is confident to effectively challenge other professionals and ensure that the wishes and feelings of the child are heard, and the right support is in place for them. This led to one child being able to spend Christmas with their mum for the first time since being at the home.

Staff receive regular supervision and say that they feel supported by the manager. The manager reviews the documents in the home herself and has good oversight of the children's current needs.

The staff are well trained and have access to an extensive training package. The manager is proactive in seeking training opportunities to further enhance staff's knowledge regarding children's individual needs.

Leaders and managers have not always ensured that recruitment checks for new staff are sufficiently thorough. For one member of staff, their employment history had not been suitably explored as to why they had left previous roles working with children.

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))	28 February 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children. In particular, repairs to the home should be made without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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

Responsible individual: Stephen Graley

Registered manager: Megan Warden

Inspector

Naomi Starbuck, Social Care Inspector

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