

2503605

Registered provider: Steps 4 Life Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who have experienced childhood adversity.

The current manager has been registered since April 2020. He holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential care.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 August 2023

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: 8 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/04/2021	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, five children were living at the home. Children enjoy good relationships with staff, who understand their needs. The children receive individualised care and contribute to their plans. One child told the inspector, 'I love it here and I love the team, they care for me.'

Staff support the children with their education and work well with other professionals to ensure that children have the resources that they need. This helps the children to make progress with their learning. For example, one child has achieved better grades since living at the home, due to the support of staff.

Children enjoy good health. Staff support the children to attend their appointments and to understand the importance of routine health checks. Staff prepare the children to keep up to date with their appointments once they move on from the home.

Staff promote each child's cultural needs. For example, for one child, support to celebrate a religious celebration in a personal way helped them to feel accepted and to build memories with the staff team.

Staff creatively support children to learn about independent living. A weekly cooking club, hosted by staff, helps the children to cook new recipes and to develop their skills, including cooking on a budget.

Joined-up work with family members and direct work with the child has helped to prepare one child to return to live with their family. The child's parent said, 'They are preparing my child to come home. They have given me the tools to support them.'

The home has ample space for children to spend time together and to have time alone. Children are involved in decisions about the decor of the home. They choose the style of their bedroom and are working with staff on developing the garden into a perfect space. Being involved in decisions about their home gives the children a sense of belonging.

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

Staff promote positive relationships between children. Staff encourage children to be respectful towards each other's differences. The children get on well together and there is no bullying.

Staff respond therapeutically when children present with complex behaviours. When staff have held a child to support their safety, staff focus on the child's welfare and restoring positive relationships. This includes children being independently spoken to and being given help to understand the reason for being held.

The registered manager has reviewed the use of consequences by staff when children's behaviour has fallen below expected standards. This review has led to staff developing better ways of working with children and staff giving fewer consequences to children. Consequences are now planned and agreed with the child. This approach helps children to learn from their actions.

Staff educate the children about how to keep themselves safe. For example, one child has benefited from time away from the home with staff, to give them an opportunity to reflect on recent incidents when they have gone missing from the home. During this time away, staff supported the child to explore topics including healthy relationships, mindfulness and internet safety. The child said this has helped them and that they understand that staff will continue to support them.

Staff have a good understanding of children's missing-from-care plans. They respond promptly and ensure that all is done to locate children when they are missing from the home. As a result, children are always returned home at the earliest opportunity. However, the registered manager's review of the associated records lack evaluation in respect of the actions of staff. This is a missed opportunity for the registered manager to review the effectiveness of staff practice in supporting children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A passionate and committed registered manager leads the staff team well. He is enthusiastic about the development of staff and works collaboratively with the senior management team to continuously develop the service. As a result, staff are engaged and enthusiastic about the vision to achieve good outcomes for children.

Staff training is tailored to meet the individual needs of children and includes training from the in-house clinician. This bespoke approach helps to ensure staff practice addresses children's specific needs.

The registered manager works well with the wider professional network. He meets regularly with the relevant professionals for each child and is a good advocate for children. This ensures that the children have timely access to the services that they need.

Recruitment of staff is carried out safely. Managers have developed and implemented a system to improve the recording of recruitment checks to make them clearer.

Staff supervisions are regular, of good quality and are practice-focused. Through supervision, the registered manager and senior managers have worked together to support the deputy manager with their development. As a result, the deputy manager has learned more about the different aspects of their role and is developing in confidence.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that an evaluation of incidents of children going missing is undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

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: 2503605

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Steps 4 Life Care Limited

Registered provider address: Arbor House, Broadway North, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 2AN

Responsible individual: Sharon Tott

Registered manager: Nicholas Buttery

Inspector

Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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