

2620992

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 October 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	outstanding
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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
08/08/2023	Full	Good
11/10/2022	Full	Good
23/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out.

Children are supported by staff to prepare for adulthood. The child who has left the home was supported to move on positively. Staff provided them with practical and emotional support, alongside continued support following their move. Children who are new to the home are welcomed sensitively. Before children move in, a thorough assessment is carried out to consider the children's needs alongside the needs of the other children in the home. Managers also use this information to consider the skill set of the staff team to ensure that they are able to meet the child's needs.

Children benefit from an experienced and consistent staff team who provide them with help and support in different areas of their lives. Children were observed to have positive relationships with staff. Staff take a patient and caring approach with children, which helps them to build trusting relationships.

Managers and staff provide good support for children's education. They strongly advocate for children to attend the school or college that meets their individual needs. They work in partnership with teachers and social workers. Staff ensure that barriers to children's education are understood and addressed, and this helps children to achieve their potential. Managers professionally challenge education providers when they believe that they are not acting in the children's best interests.

Staff support children to spend time with their family and friends in line with agreed plans. They advocate for children's views around family time and support decisions made in children's best interests. Children's family and friends visit the home and receive a warm welcome. This helps children to maintain relationships with people who are important to them.

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

The registered manager ensures that there are clear safety plans in place for children. These include important information to guide and signpost staff when managing specific risks to children. Plans are shared with the child's allocated social worker, school staff and clinical support services. This collaborative approach means that children's risks are explored and reviewed, and strategies to manage them are agreed by all relevant professionals.

Staff are therapeutically trained, which is embedded in their approach for caring for the children. Regular input from in-house therapists and other professionals ensures that staff provide care that is reflective and trauma informed. Staff respond calmly and safely when any incidents occur, which promotes children's welfare.

Staff focus on promoting children's positive behaviours. As a result, physical intervention is used rarely and only as a last resort to safeguard children from harm. Children are supported to reflect on the hold after the event. However, not all staff who are involved in incidents are always spoken to by the manager. This limits their ability to reflect on the event and identify any lessons learned.

On occasion, children have been reported missing from home. When this happens, children experience a well-coordinated response. Staff use their relationships with the children to support them in making positive decisions, and staff work with professionals to reduce these risks. All staff are trained in the missing-from-home procedure and work in line with it, helping to ensure that children return home safely.

Staff undertake work with children to help them understand risks. However, they do not consistently record this work. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate how they are helping children to learn about risks and for the manager to have effective oversight of, and evaluate, staff practice.

On one occasion, managers did not conduct a thorough investigation into historical allegations made against a staff member. Failing to seek the views of the former resident who made the allegations meant that relevant evidence was not gathered. This resulted in an incomplete understanding of the events and potential risk from them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is enthusiastic and child focused. She has a good understanding of the progress that children make and celebrates children's achievements. She is supported by a competent deputy and an experienced leadership team. They all have high aspirations for the children and the care they are provided. This enthusiasm and genuine care for children is seen throughout the staff team.

Staff are provided with a good range of training. When the manager identifies a specific developmental need for a child, specialist training is sourced for all staff to attend. This ensures that the care provided meets each child's individual needs.

Staff say that they are well supported by the management team and receive regular supervision. Staff and managers reflect on their practice and look at ways of developing their relationships with each child. There is also a strong focus on staff well-being. As a result, staff feel supported and want to remain working in the home.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. They provide an opportunity for the team to get together and share information and updates about the children. They are also used as a development opportunity for staff and are attended by the clinical lead.

Managers have effective oversight of staff practice. They have implemented systems of monitoring that highlight opportunities to further develop children's care and help improve outcomes for them.

Managers have established good relationships with external professionals and keep them regularly updated. Professionals say that they are well informed and that children are making significant progress while living in the home.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that any allegations made against staff are investigated fully. Ensure that children are supported to address any concerning behaviours and that this work is recorded.	19 December 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair, including speaking to staff following any incidents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 2620992

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Registered provider address: Camomile House, 6 Embassy Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TP

Responsible individual: Lucy Mitchell

Registered manager: Kayleigh Mullen

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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