

2629230

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company own this home. It provides care for up to two children aged between eight and 18 years with social and/or emotional needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2022 and is currently undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 May 2022

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: 11 January 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
11/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff and the clinical team work collaboratively and use a therapeutic parenting model which helps children to receive nurturing care and support.

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home. The child has made some significant progress considering his starting point. For example, he is now attending mainstream school, is motivated to engage with lessons and is making progress with his learning. The child is now feeling positive about being able to achieve his learning targets and subsequent qualifications.

Staff have formed positive relationships with the child. He feels comfortable and content in his home environment. The environment is warm, cosy and welcoming and provides ample space for him to relax and unwind. Staff have supported him to personalise his bedroom, which has helped him to have a sense of belonging. Staff have removed notice boards in communal areas to help give the home a more homely and family feel.

The child has opportunities to express his wishes and feelings daily through speaking with staff and at weekly meetings and key-work sessions. Staff use a 'you said, we did' approach to consultations with the child and this evidences how they respond to his wishes and feelings. They do this well and, consequently, the child feels listened to and valued.

The child spends good-quality time with his close family and friends. He is forming good support networks, which reduces the risk of social exclusion and isolation.

The child leads a healthy lifestyle. Staff encourage him to eat healthily, take regular exercise and to develop his self-care skills. He has access to a variety of activities in the community, such as meals out, shopping and going out on day trips. This is improving his social skills, self-esteem and confidence.

Staff and the manager encourage the child to do chores around the home. He helps with cooking, washing dishes and doing laundry, as well as with budgeting and the household shopping. This promotes the child's independence skills and prepares him for the transition to adulthood.

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

Staff know the child very well and identify, understand and manage risks to promote his safety. They promptly report any safeguarding concerns and take action to keep him safe. The child told the inspector that he feels safe living at the home.

Staff model good behaviour for the child. They provide him with consistent routines and boundaries. Staff use restorative practice to help him to understand his

behaviour and to make positive choices. He is learning from his behaviours and is regulating his emotions better. Consequently, there have not been any physical restraints, as staff are able to de-escalate situations effectively.

The quality of the child's behaviour management plans and risk assessments has improved. They now identify all known and potential risks. Staff follow guidance set out in the child's plans and this helps them to keep the child safe.

The manager handles complaints meticulously and transparently. She acknowledges receipt of these complaints and liaises with relevant partner agencies to address issues raised. She ensures that all relevant people involved receive feedback.

Staff consistently undertake health and safety checks such as fire alarm tests, emergency lighting tests, fire drills and fire extinguisher checks. However, the manager did not ensure that the home's fire risk assessment was reviewed by a competent person. This has not had a detrimental impact on the child's safety to date but has the potential to do so if not fully explored with competent fire safety professionals. During the inspection, the manager took on board concerns raised by the inspector about this and sought to urgently address the issue.

The manager has recently reviewed the locality risk assessment. However, she did not consult partner agencies in compiling this assessment. This does not show good partnership working to keep up to date with any issues in the local community and neighbouring areas. This is a missed opportunity to further promote children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is largely clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She is committed to ensuring that the staff team delivers good-quality care to children. The manager and staff have high aspirations for the child they care for. They want him to succeed and are supporting him to make measurable progress.

The manager ensures that there are enough staff to meet the child's needs. There have been some changes to staffing, but the manager uses consistent staff when cover is needed, to ensure continuity of care to the child.

Challenges in recruiting a full staff team are evident and there are three vacant posts. The provider has committed to not having another child move into the home until sufficient staffing is in place. Recruitment is ongoing. This shows a measured response and good leadership.

Staff receive good-quality reflective supervision, which supports them in undertaking their roles effectively. The manager praises and thanks staff for how well they are helping the child to have a positive experience at the home and make good progress. Staff thrive on this good support and feel valued in their role.

The manager understands the benefits of a well-trained and skilled workforce. She has reviewed staff training, which is improving. Staff have completed a range of courses to support their development and they reflect on practice and key issues with the organisation's clinical psychologist in team meetings. Although some staff have not yet completed all mandatory face-to-face training, this is now scheduled to take place within the next month. One staff member, who has recently started to work at the home and has previously worked in residential care, has not attained the relevant level 3 qualification within the timescale set out in regulation. She is, however, now enrolled on the course to address this as soon as practicable.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	15 July 2022
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that the fire risk assessment is reviewed by a competent person.	30 June 2022
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	31 Dec 2022

that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma; The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).	29 July 2022

When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	
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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: 2629230

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Registered provider address: Apex House, Calthorpe Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B15 1TR

Responsible individual: Peter Cirulis

Registered manager: Simran Matarazzo

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, Social Care Inspector

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