

2652546

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to four children with emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2025; she has the necessary qualifications for the role.

Four children were living in the home at the time of the inspection; all four children shared their views with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 February 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: 8 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/07/2024	Full	Good
06/06/2023	Full	Good
31/08/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home, and one has moved out, this move was managed sensitively and in consultation with the child and professionals working with the child. There are four children who have lived together for a significant period of time and developed positive peer relationships. Children show warmth and a closeness towards each other. These relationships are stable, supportive and respectful, contributing to a settled home environment.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Children benefit from personalised bedrooms that reflect their interests and help them feel a sense of ownership and comfort. Communal areas are thoughtfully arranged to provide relaxed spaces where children can spend time together and feel at ease. Photos displayed throughout the home celebrate children's achievements and shared experiences; this creates a homely atmosphere where children feel valued.

Staff know children well. They have a strong understanding of each child's personality, history and individual needs, which enables them to provide bespoke care that is responsive and consistent. This insight is effective in helping staff build trusting and meaningful relationships with children.

Children's emotional and physical health needs are consistently met to a high standard. Staff demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of each child's individual health requirements and respond quickly when concerns arise. Their calm, nurturing approach helps children to feel safe and enables them to express their feelings with confidence. In addition, staff benefits from a strong clinical oversight, that enhances the quality of care provided. This targeted intervention is delivered through the organisation's in-house clinicians in collaboration with effective partnership working, ensuring that children receive well-coordinated, and therapeutic care.

Children are well supported to engage in their education. Staff promote clear routines and support regular school attendance. They work proactively with schools and education professionals to ensure children's needs are understood. When barriers to learning arise, staff respond quickly with individualised strategies that build confidence and help children re-establish positive learning habits.

Children are supported to spend meaningful time with people who are important to them. Staff recognise the value of maintaining positive relationships and help children to keep in contact in ways that are safe and appropriate to their individual needs. They provide practical support to facilitate visits and communication, ensuring children remain connected to those who matter to them.

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

Staff have skills in supporting children who self-harm or have disordered eating. They have specialist training and use this effectively, to respond sensitively to children's needs. Strong relationships help children to feel safe and share their worries or concerns. Risks are managed well, and staff understand children's triggers and coping strategies. As a result, children feel well supported and make steady progress in developing safer ways to manage their emotions.

When children have gone missing from the home, staff have followed relevant plans and ensured that children returned safely. The registered manager provides swift oversight and evaluation of these incidents, helping to understand the reasons and identify strategies to prevent recurrence. Return home interviews are completed by children's placing authorities, ensuring that all adults involved in the child's care have the information they need to keep children safe.

Staff use physical intervention appropriately to keep children safe. When intervention is required, it is reasonable, proportionate, and only used as a last resort after de-escalation strategies have been attempted. The registered manager maintains clear and effective oversight of all incidents and ensures that children are spoken to afterwards, giving them the opportunity to express their views and feelings. This reinforces a culture of safety and accountability.

Allegations against staff are managed well, and children's safety remains central to practice. Managers respond promptly and appropriately, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed and that children's welfare is prioritised. However, on one occasion the regulatory body was not notified regarding an allegation. Although this did not place children at risk, it represents a shortfall in meeting regulatory expectations for reporting serious events.

Safer recruitment procedures are consistently followed. All necessary checks are completed before staff start work in the home. Vetting records are organised and demonstrate that leaders and managers take appropriate steps to ensure staff are suitable. This helps to promote a safe environment for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced, committed, and passionate about achieving good outcomes for children. She provides clear and consistent leadership, ensuring that daily practice runs smoothly and that children's needs are met. The manager is supported by a competent deputy, and together they oversee a stable staff team who know the children well.

Staff report that they enjoy working in the home and feel supported by the management team. Leaders and managers are approachable and responsive, offering regular supervision, guidance, and opportunities for professional development. This strong

support contributes to positive morale and a stable workforce and promotes good quality care to children.

The manager knows the strengths of the service and where further improvements are needed. Monitoring systems are used well to review the quality of care and ensures children receive good support. There is a positive team culture, overseen by clear and effective leadership, this helps to create an environment where children feel, valued, and stable.

Team meetings take place regularly and include attendance from the clinical lead, who provides staff with professional support and guidance. This helps to strengthen practice, promote reflective discussions, and ensure that children's needs are understood and responded to consistently.

Training and professional development are a priority. Staff receive specialist training that is tailored to individual and complex needs of children. This ensures that staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to provide safe and responsive care.

Partnership working with external agencies is a clear strength of the home. Staff maintain effective relationships with a wide range of professionals. Professionals provide positive feedback about the home and report that staff share information promptly, engage proactively in multi-agency discussions, and contribute meaningfully to planning for children. This collaborative working means that children's needs are understood holistically and support is well coordinated, leading to better outcomes for the children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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: 2652546

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: Chloe Holt

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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