

2671339

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 provides care for up to three children who have experienced trauma and have associated difficulties with their emotional well-being.

The manager has been in post since 1 September 2025. She has applied to register with Ofsted.

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 September 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: 14 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/10/2024	Full	Good
21/11/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/01/2023	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality care from a staff team that knows them well and understands their individual needs.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home. This was a well-planned move and the child was an integral part of the planning. Staff have provided ongoing support to the child, which has supported them in settling into their new home.

The home is a welcoming environment for children. Staff help children to personalise their bedrooms according to their individual tastes and interests. When damage has been caused to the home, managers and staff ensure that repairs are undertaken quickly and replacement items are sourced without delay.

Children's education is prioritised. Barriers to learning are actively challenged by the manager, and one child has recently successfully transitioned from school to college. When communication difficulties with education providers are identified, the manager and staff take prompt action to address them.

Staff understand children's healthcare needs and support them to attend routine and specialist health appointments. One child has been supported to engage with services to support their emotional well-being. Staff have worked hard to help this child so that they feel able to talk about their feelings and engage with this support.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with those who are important to them. Staff understand the value of these connections, and they make practical arrangements to ensure that children can spend time with family and friends.

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

Staff are trained in child protection and demonstrate a good understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. This helps to ensure that children are protected from harm effectively.

When children are missing from home, staff respond quickly and follow the correct procedures. They actively look for the child and work in partnership with the police and other professionals to locate them and encourage their safe return. However, missing-from-home risk assessments are not always updated, and children are not consistently spoken to on their return. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that children are supported to keep themselves safe and understand the circumstances surrounding these incidents.

When incidents occur, staff use techniques to verbally de-escalate situations, preventing them from becoming more serious. This means that staff only use physical intervention as a last resort when necessary and proportionate to keep everyone safe. When physical interventions are used, children are always spoken to following incidents. This ensures that their views are considered and children can be helped to learn from incidents. However, staff are not consistently spoken to within the necessary timeframe. This limits managers' ability to support staff to reflect on their practice and consider how effectively incidents are managed.

Staff ensure that the home environment remains safe. When necessary, room searches are completed in response to concerns about children's welfare. These searches are conducted in a manner that is respectful and promotes children's privacy and dignity, while also ensuring that there is a proactive approach to safeguarding children's physical and emotional well-being.

Staff employed are subject to robust safer recruitment checks that help to ensure that children are protected from unsuitable people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has only been in post a short time. There was an effective and well-planned handover from the previous manager, which helped to minimise any instability for children and the staff team.

The manager is committed and caring. She is supported by a competent deputy manager and a proactive senior leadership team. Managers are child centred and are focused on achieving the best outcomes for children.

Although there have been some staffing challenges, a core team is in place, which provides stability for children. Staff based at the provider's other homes are also used to cover any staffing shortfalls. This helps to ensure that children continue to receive consistent care and support.

Managers ensure that team meetings take place regularly. These are a forum for staff to come together and share their experience and skills. The manager also involves the company's clinical lead in some of the meetings to offer additional support and guidance. This helps staff have a good understanding of children's needs and provide consistent support.

Leaders and managers provide effective leadership and demonstrate a strong commitment to making improvements at the home. This has included a recent incident and team stability audit. Internal and external monitoring systems provide managers with good oversight of the home.

The manager and majority of staff receive regular supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose. However, not all staff have received the stated levels of supervision during their probation period. This has limited managers' ability to

maintain consistent oversight of staff's practice while they are learning and developing in their roles.

Monthly visits from the independent person help to provide oversight of the quality of children's care and the arrangements in place to keep them safe from harm. Managers are open to this feedback, and it helps them and staff to understand the strengths and areas of development of the care provided for children. The manager responds to any identified shortfalls to secure improvement.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are provided with up-to-date information and strategies in relation to children who go missing from home and that following incidents, children are spoken to in order to help them and staff understand risks.	7 November 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that following incidents of restraint, staff are spoken to within necessary timeframes.	7 November 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. As part of the performance management process, poor performance should be addressed by a timely plan to bring about improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2671339

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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