

2672636

Registered provider: Caring Steps Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care for four children who have had adverse childhood experiences.

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager, who has been in post since the home was registered with Ofsted in June 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the previous inspection, no children have moved into or out of the home. At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of the children. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of their lives.

Staff ensure that children's wishes and feelings contribute to the care that they receive. Children's views are captured by staff through direct work, one-to-one conversations and planned meetings. This ensures that children can participate in the day-to-day decisions about their lives. Consequently, children feel listened to and they engage positively in the home.

The manager and staff actively support children's education. Both children are in education and have good attendance. The manager worked with education providers to secure a suitable placement tailored to one child's specific needs. This child has settled in well at their new school. In addition, staff support children with travelling to school and helping them with their homework. One teacher said, 'Staff reinforce what we say. I'm really impressed.' Another education professional said, 'There has been massive progress from [name of child's] starting point, I see a positive future for [name of child].' Through close partnership working, staff and education providers support children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met. Children are supported to attend all their routine health appointments. The provider's in-house therapist supports staff to establish appropriate approaches to children's emotional health and well-being. Additionally, staff seek specialist help when necessary. This multi-agency approach means that children's all-round needs are met.

Children engage in a variety of activities, including go-karting, going to escape rooms and Pokémon hunting. Staff have taken both children on holiday, with one child going abroad. These experiences help children to build self-esteem and confidence and create lasting memories that contribute to their personal growth and development.

Staff help children to spend time with people who are important to them, such as family and friends. Staff have positive relationships with children's family members, ensuring that safe and meaningful conversations and visits take place for children when appropriate. Another child has had friends to stay at the home. This approach helps children to maintain relationships with people who are significant in their lives and demonstrates that children's views are listened to.

Staff actively speak to children about equality and diversity, emphasising the importance of respect for other cultures and religions. Children have received certificates for participating in courses on issues such as Black Lives Matter. This

learning is invaluable in helping children understand different cultures and backgrounds, fostering respect and equipping them with life skills that will benefit their futures and transition to adulthood.

The home is welcoming and well decorated. Children's bedrooms are personalised and comfortably furnished. However, the internal door locks and window restrictors on the ground floor detract from the homely atmosphere.

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

Children form strong relationships with staff, built on trust and affection. One child said, 'I would like to live here until I am 18 years old because I am happy here.' Children feel safe at this home and trust the staff.

There have been very few safeguarding incidents. When incidents do occur, staff manage them appropriately and follow the correct safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are kept safe.

There have been no incidents of children going missing. This is testament to the trusting relationships staff have with the children. One child said, 'Staff are nice. They treat me with respect.' If children were to go missing, there are clear plans in place for staff to follow.

Internal systems for managing children's use of the internet are good. For example, a system is in place which allows parental controls to be implemented to ensure that children access age-appropriate material. In addition, staff carry out regular checks on children's devices and support children by providing educational internet sessions. These actions help children to navigate the internet safely and make them aware of the risks.

Staff actively help children to understand their behaviours and successes. Each child has a praise book that staff write in daily, noting the child's achievements. These are celebrated with rewards. For example, children can go shopping to choose something they want or select a prize from their individual reward boxes. Additionally, children participate in and then receive certificates for attending anti-bullying courses, which further enhances their understanding of behaviours. As a result, positive behaviours in children are reinforced through restorative practice and praise.

In the main, children's care plans and risk assessments provide detailed information on their current risks and give guidance for staff to follow. However, the children's medication plans did not detail the specific actions for staff to take when children's medication is missed or refused. The manager acknowledged this recording shortfall and promptly took action to rectify it.

Physical interventions in this home do not happen often. When children are restrained, this is done as a last resort. However, after interventions, staff are not always debriefed. On one occasion, the manager and the staff member who was

involved in the restraint spoke to the child after the incident. This does not provide independent oversight. The absence of independent oversight and evaluation of physical interventions limits independent scrutiny to identify any gaps in practice and learning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened. She is appropriately qualified and experienced.

Leaders have failed to ensure that the monitoring systems in place fully support the development of the home. For example, the registered manager's systems have failed to identify the absence of clear guidance for staff to follow when administering children's medication. On two occasions when a child refused their medication, this was not recorded in their medication log and was only identified during the inspection. The manager had no knowledge of this recording shortfall. In addition to this, the responsible individual has not recorded conversations relating to an incident when a member of staff sustained an injury while on shift. This lack of oversight has the potential to impact on the quality of care received by the children.

Although staff say they enjoy working in the home, they do not consistently receive support from the manager and leaders. Staff are unable to openly share worries or concerns with the leadership team. While this has not impacted on the care the children receive, it has significantly lowered staff morale and caused them to feel undervalued by the leadership team.

Staff have completed a variety of training relevant to the children's needs. The therapeutic model of care used in the home is understood by all staff. Consequently, staff have the knowledge and skills to provide good-quality care to the children.

The manager and staff have built positive relationships with external professionals. A social worker said, 'They listen to my advice. We have good partnership working.' This means there is a coordinated approach to meeting children's needs.

The manager recognised the shortfalls identified during this inspection and provided reassurance that improvements will be made.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(h)) This specifically relates to the manager supporting staff at all times and ensuring that the home's internal monitoring systems are effective.	22 March 2024
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 within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1) (3)(b)(i)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered person speaking to staff and children following any physical interventions. In	22 March 2024

addition, that children are spoken to by staff who were not involved in the physical intervention.	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)) This specifically relates to children's health records.	22 March 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home provides a nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children. The home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than institutional impression, specifically in relation to ground floor window restrictors and internal door locks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2672636

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Caring Steps Ltd

Registered provider address: 29 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands
WV1 4DJ

Responsible individual: Charandeep Gill

Registered manager: Bethan Lock

Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

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