

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 owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. All three were present during the inspection and two spoke to the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 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	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: 20 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2024	Full	Good
21/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress in all aspects of their lives and staff and managers aspire for children to flourish. Children enjoy new experiences and activities, which are varied. They are encouraged to attend education. They are also encouraged to develop their social and emotional skills and maintain relationships with people who are important to them and with friends. For example, children's friends and siblings visit for sleepovers. Overall, children are settled in the home and make progress in education and with their social and independence skills.

Children have trusting relationships with staff and managers. They approach staff for their needs to be met and staff respond to children with affection and humour. Staff capture children's days in daily diaries. This approach is used to celebrate their achievements and offers children understanding when they may not have had a good day. This indicates to children that staff and managers care about them each day, regardless of what has occurred.

Staff and managers promote positive behaviour using a range of strategies. For example, children may be given verbal or written praise for their positive actions or small presents as a token of appreciation. Children's achievements are celebrated, no matter how big or small.

Staff and managers seek children's views. Children can have a say in a structured manner as well as in natural discussion. This enables them to feel that they are participating in the care they receive. Feedback from professionals is positive. They say that communication and information-sharing are strengths, which enable children to receive care from the wider network around them.

The home is large and spacious, with plenty of room for the children to interact with one another or to spend time on their own. Children's bedrooms are individualised. However, there are scuff marks on the paintwork and the general maintenance of the home needs to improve, as this detracts from the nurturing environment.

The use of door sensors and window restrictors in the home, detracts from the homely feel and contributes to an institutional look and perception. Risk assessments regarding the use of window restrictors do not clearly identify sufficient risk to warrant their ongoing use. This restrictive practice requires review. For some children door sensors are used despite no formal assessment of whether these are required or not. One child is said to now have anxieties about the door sensors being switched off. The normalised approach of monitoring some children's liberty contributes further to an institutional feel and would warrant further assessment and planning to ensure children to feel safe in their home without monitoring systems.

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

Children know how to make a complaint. The manager regularly consults with children to give them an opportunity to share any concerns. When children raise concerns, they are responded to by the manager and given timely responses. Concerns are shared with relevant professionals when appropriate. This helps children feel listened to and increases their feeling of safety.

Staff use physical interventions proportionately. Records relating to these interventions are detailed and include the de-escalation measures used by staff. Managerial oversight is recorded and analyses the effectiveness and learning from these interventions.

Most safeguarding concerns are identified, and prompt action is taken to keep children safe. However, there have been some occasions when staff have failed to adhere to the home's safeguarding policy. Strategies put in place by the manager ensure that appropriate action is subsequently taken to ensure children are safe and that learning is identified to mitigate future risk, but these incidents mean that some children are not consistently safeguarded and this impacts on the manager's ability to keep them safe.

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

There are shortfalls relating to some children's experiences of restrictions, the staff reporting and response to safeguarding issues and the correct and timely response to notifiable incidents. Managerial oversight is mitigating some of these issues and whilst there is no apparent detriment to the children, staff are not consistently fulfilling their responsibilities in reporting these incidents.

Not all staff have completed their mandatory training or qualifications within the required timescales. One member of staff has continued to lone work with children, despite failing to achieve their qualification and training within timescales. Whilst management action is being taken to address these issues, It is not clear how the manager is assured that staff are equipped to meet the needs of children in the home.

The manager has not always notified Ofsted of significant events, for example, an allegation made by a child. When Ofsted is notified, some notifications have been delayed. This means that Ofsted's capacity to monitor the safeguards has been reduced.

Since the last inspection, the staff team has been through significant change. Several staff have left the organisation, for a variety of reasons. The manager has now established a strong and reliable team, who work well together and have a range of knowledge and expertise. A high number of agency workers have been used while recruitment has been ongoing. The manager has ensured that, when possible, the same agency workers are used consistently to provide children with continuity.

The home is managed by an experienced manager who understands her role. She has a clear vision for the home and has high expectations for children and staff. She is supported by a long-standing skilled deputy manager. An experienced responsible

individual provides oversight of the leadership team. Leaders and managers acknowledge the shortfalls identified and accepts there are areas for development.

The manager has built strong relationships with the children and is present in the home. This increases her ability to ensure that children receive care that is based on their unique needs and enables them to advocate on behalf of children. The management team is reflective in their practice and determined to build a strong team to effect positive change in children's lives.

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. Staff must follow the safeguarding policy and procedure of the organisation. This includes notifying the manager about safeguarding concerns without delay.	30 April 2025

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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, ensure that staff complete their qualifications and the organisation's mandatory and house-specific training within timescales.	30 April 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any [other] incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) In particular, ensure that all serious and significant incidents are reported to Ofsted within the required timescale.	30 April 2025
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d)) In particular, ensure that the use of motion sensors and restrictions is appropriate, and that regular reviews take place to ensure their continued use remains appropriate.	30 April 2025

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 ground floor 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: Caring Steps Limited, 29 Waterloo Road,
Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 4DJ

Responsible individual: Charandeep Gill

Registered manager: Laura Campbell

Inspector

Tonia Dubidat, Social Care Inspector

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