

2686012

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2025.

Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection, and all were spoken to by inspectors.

This inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns or allegations received by Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 October 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: 22 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/04/2024	Full	Good
18/04/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children were living at the home at the time of inspection. Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home, and one child has moved out.

When children move on from the home, staff work with them, their placing authority and their new home to support their move to be as positive as possible. Alongside this, staff provide ongoing support to children, which enables children to maintain contact with adults who have cared for them, and they help them settle into their new home.

There have been difficulties with attendance in education and training for some children. Staff have explored these issues with children and worked with different education providers and placing authorities to identify alternatives. As a result, one child has begun a job, and another child was able to sit their exams at the end of the school year.

Staff help children to gain life skills to support their independence in line with their age and ability. In addition to this, two children in the home have been supported to gain paid employment, and one has been supported to climb Snowdon to raise funds for a charity. The support from staff is helping children gain valuable employment experience and contribute to wider society.

Children have not always been supported to have consistent routines and boundaries. Undesirable behaviours, such as vaping, use of bad language and poor sleep routines, are not consistently challenged by staff. Responses from staff to these challenges need to be strengthened to ensure that children understand appropriate behaviour and routines and that they are well prepared for adult life.

Staff support children to spend time with their family in line with agreed plans. They advocate for children's views around family time and encourage decisions to be made in children's best interests. This helps children to maintain relationships that are important to them and ensures they have a wider support network around them.

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

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and have a good awareness of children's needs and vulnerabilities. This helps to ensure that staff respond to children in line with these needs and are able to keep them safe.

There have been some incidents of children being missing from the home. When incidents occur, staff follow protocols to locate children and report to relevant agencies in a timely manner. When children return home, staff spend time with them, offering them support and advice. Positive responses to these incidents have helped ensure children

are located and returned home safely, as well as helped children understand the risks associated with being missing from home.

There have been no incidents of staff physically restraining the children. This demonstrates that staff are effective in managing children's behaviour and are able to help children in ways that prevent incidents from escalating.

Incidents of self-harm are managed effectively. Staff offer first aid and know when to escalate concerns and seek additional medical support. Staff reflect on incidents with children, sensitively discussing feelings and alternative coping strategies.

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

There is a registered manager in post, who is supported by a deputy manager. They know the children well.

Internal monitoring is not always effective in ensuring that managers have sufficient oversight of children's care. On some occasions, managers have not had effective oversight of staff practice, and managers' decision-making has not always been clearly recorded. In addition, managers have not always shown a suitable level of professional curiosity in relation to some incidents and have, at times, given inconsistent messages to staff. While this has not significantly affected children's experiences, poor oversight and a lack of consistency from managers mean that staff have not always been provided with the necessary guidance they need. This has the potential to affect staff's ability to consistently provide good-quality care to children.

There is a stable and consistent team of staff. This means that children are cared for by staff who know them well. Staff enjoy working at the home and say that they feel valued and supported.

Staff complete a wide range of training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to meet children's individual needs. This has included upskilling sessions from the clinical team, a session from the local police on managing concerns relating to substance misuse and training on how to manage allegations.

Staff are provided with regular supervision sessions, which are practice related and used to support staff welfare. In addition to this, there are regular team meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity for staff to come together and share information, as well as development opportunities for staff.

The manager has developed effective links with external professionals that promote a multi-agency response in supporting children. Professionals are positive regarding the quality of care children receive. A professional said, 'There is always super communication; it is very effective. They are one of the best homes I have worked with.'

The manager does not always notify the regulator when there are serious incidents. This prevents the regulator from having up-to-date and effective oversight of children's care.

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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(e)) In particular the registered person must ensure that all management decisions are recorded, that all information is shared with staff consistently and that staff are following the policies and procedures agreed within the home.	12 December 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to—	12 December 2025

manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(c)) In particular, the registered person should consistently support children to have routines that will assist them to prepare for adulthood, and they should also challenge any behaviours that may negatively impact on children's future outcomes.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 December 2025

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: 2686012

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: Sophie Ingleby

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector
Chrisoula Contoyianni, 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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