

2749204

Registered provider: Step-A-Side Company Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to two children who have experienced childhood trauma, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning difficulties. At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home and spoke with the inspector.

The manager has been in post since June 2024 and is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 29 October 2025

Date of last inspection: 5 August 2025

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Outcome from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Findings from the inspection

Leaders and managers describe the home as having 'ups and downs'. They recognise that challenges were heightened over the summer months, although explain that risk-taking behaviours were reducing.

Both children have been supported to make progress. One child is regularly engaging in their education, and the other child has been supported to achieve some qualifications. They have both been supported to spend time with their family members. Staff work collaboratively with children's families and placing authorities to ensure that this time is positive.

Children have been supported to participate in a range of activities and hobbies. This provides them with positive opportunities to access the community and steers them away from less socially aware behaviours. One child says that they like living in the home.

Following a significant incident in the home, one child was supported to move out immediately. Although this action was necessary to protect children from further harm, it is not a positive outcome for the child. Staff have provided short-term outreach support, and opportunities to say goodbye to the child have been arranged. It is not clear how the child has been supported to understand the significance of their actions or the risks that they posed to others.

Following the significant incident, the child who continues to live in the home has been provided with emotional support and the opportunity to reflect on what happened. A seemingly minor disagreement between the children has resulted in behaviours that could have resulted in significant injury. Staff did not appreciate the significance of the disagreement at the time and did not mediate for a more positive outcome before behaviours escalated. The children were not supported to safely resolve their conflict.

Immediate action has been taken to protect children from harm, as one child has moved out of the home and the other is subject to high staff supervision levels when they are out in the community. However, meaningful change relating to children's ability to recognise risk and make positive choices has not yet been realised.

Leaders and managers have not recognised the breadth of risks that are posed to children who are victim of child criminal exploitation. Staff have had some conversations with children to help them to understand risk, although these

conversations are not always recorded. As a result, opportunities to support children's understanding of risk and how to stay safe are sometimes missed. Furthermore, support from external services is not always accessed. Although concerns have been shared with multi-agency teams, their contribution to planning children's care is not always impactful.

When the responses of external professionals have not been sufficient, the registered manager has offered challenge to promote more positive outcomes. However, when staff have requested additional training to help them develop the skills and knowledge that they require to support children's individual needs, relevant learning opportunities have not always been provided swiftly.

The provider recognises that the levels of restriction that are placed on the child living in the home are not sustainable. As a result, they do not feel able to meet the child's longer-term needs and they are working with the child's placing authority to find a suitable home for them.

The home is operating outside of its statement of purpose. Staff's experience and skills do not support them to care for children who are at risk of child criminal exploitation effectively. Leaders and managers have not yet reviewed their statement of purpose and the processes that they use to assess the home as suitable to meet children's needs before they move in.

Leaders and managers recognise the vulnerabilities that have been identified that this inspection. Two of the three requirements that were raised at the full inspection have been restated. Additionally, two other requirements have been issued. Leaders and managers have assured that action will be taken to address the vulnerabilities that have been identified before a child is supported to move to the home in the future.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/08/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/12/2023	Full	Good

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; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have a robust understanding of the risks that are posed to children inside and outside of the home. Staff must respond to reduce risk effectively and help children to understand	31 January 2026

how to keep themselves increasingly safe. Specifically, staff must help children to recognise and respond safely to concerns of criminal exploitation, knife crime and substance misuse. In addition, the registered person must ensure that staff support children to spend time in the community safely. The location must be safe for the child and staff should take action to reduce the likelihood of children being at risk of harm and/or drawn into exploitation.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; and	31 January 2026

strive to gain each child's respect and trust. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)(xi)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff help children to communicate with others in a respectful manner and help them to identify when their presentation and language is counterproductive. Staff must help children to develop socially aware behaviours, safely respond to conflict and seek resolution and understand the consequences of their actions on themselves and others.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must use monitoring systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the support and guidance that is provided to children so that their learning needs can be identified and further support can be provided as required. In addition, the registered person must ensure that staff are suitably skilled and experienced to meet children's individual needs and help them to stay safe effectively. Specifically, when staff request for additional training to help them to develop the skills that they need, these opportunities for learning must be offered swiftly.	22 December 2025

Finally, the registered person must ensure that before children move to the home their needs and associated risks are carefully considered. The registered person must review the skills and experience of the staff team to ensure that children's needs can be met and that they can be helped to stay safe effectively. The registered person must review and evaluate their procedures to identify learning to strengthen their analysis and the decisions that are made.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	22 December 2025

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2749204

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step-A-Side Company Limited

Registered provider address: 29 Market Place, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8AA

Responsible individual: Rachel Carwardine

Registered manager: Danielle Warren

Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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