

2772529

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands 1) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for three children who have had adverse childhood experiences.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2024.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 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: 30 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children were living in the home at the time of this inspection, and they all shared their views with the inspector. Staff welcome children into the home with sensitivity and care. Since the last inspection, one child has moved to the home, in an emergency. The manager carefully assessed the child's needs alongside those of children already living in the home, ensuring appropriate support was in place. As a result, children have been helped to develop positive relationships with one another.

Staff support children to access education in line with their individual plans. When children are not in full-time education, staff provide tailored learning activities to help them rebuild confidence and engagement in learning.

Staff know the children well and speak with pride about their progress. There are warm and positive interactions between staff and children, reinforcing the message that children are cared for and valued.

Children are supported to build and maintain relationships with their families. This helps provide children with a sense of belonging.

Staff provide good support for children in relation to their health. Medication is managed safely, with clear systems in place which staff follow. Following one medication error, the manager conducted a full investigation and provided additional training to staff. No further errors have occurred.

The home is spacious and children's bedrooms are personalised. However, damage to televisions and other household items is not promptly addressed. The upstairs games room remains unused and the garden is not child friendly, with no garden furniture or toys. These issues detract from the overall homeliness and welcoming atmosphere of the home.

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

Staff work proactively with children to help them understand and manage their vulnerabilities. Key-work sessions are well planned and purposeful, supporting children to develop insight and coping strategies.

Staff generally manage risks to children well. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide clear guidance for staff in relation to most risks. However, an emerging risk for one child was not reflected in their plan. Additionally, it is not clear that one child or their placing authority agreed to the home's expectations around smoking or vaping at the time they moved into the home. These omissions could hinder effective risk management.

Staff are skilled in managing risks associated with child sexual exploitation. Through targeted training, multi-agency collaboration and consistent support, staff have successfully reduced risks for individual children, helping them become safer.

Physical intervention is used appropriately and only as a last resort. Staff are trained in its use and ensure children receive emotional support following incidents. Managers review all incidents and talk to children and staff about incidents. This learning is used to inform practice and update children's plans.

There have been some incidents of children being missing from home. Procedures for managing these incidents are robust. Staff follow established protocols, and responses are clearly documented in children's plans. This approach ensures a structured safeguarding approach which prioritises children's safety.

Allegations and complaints are thoroughly investigated. Managers engage with children, external professionals and relevant agencies, and outcomes are clearly communicated. This reassures children and others who raise concerns that they are taken seriously.

Staff respond appropriately to accidents and incidents of self-harm. There have been no serious incidents, but when more minor incidents occur, staff are confident in following procedures to ensure children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and committed, and she is supported by a capable deputy. Together, they provide strong and effective leadership.

The manager maintains good oversight of the home. She reviews significant incidents to identify patterns and guide staff practice in response to children's evolving needs.

Despite some staff changes since the last inspection, the team continues to provide stable and consistent care to children. Staff understand their roles and are supported by managers to develop their skills. They are encouraged to reflect on and improve their practice, which helps improve children's experiences.

Managers respond effectively when staff raise any concerns or there are challenges linked to dynamics in the staff team. Recent one-to-one sessions with senior leaders have enabled staff to raise issues, which have been addressed appropriately.

New staff receive a structured induction, including shadowing and in-house training. This helps them to gain the knowledge they need and improve their confidence to carry out their roles. However, one new staff member has not received supervision in line with the provider's statement of purpose, limiting the manager's oversight of their practice during their probation period.

Team meetings are reflective, well attended and supported by the therapeutic team. These sessions promote learning and enhance staff's practice.

The manager and staff have established strong links with external professionals. Feedback is overwhelmingly positive, with one professional stating, 'It's the best children's home I have ever worked with. All the staff care about what they do, and there has been brilliant partnership working.'

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to; meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that repairs are carried out quickly, items that are broken are replaced, the garden area is a usable space for the children and that efforts are made to make the home a more homely environment.	1 October 2025
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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	20 August 2025

In particular, ensure that staff are provided with clear strategies to manage any emerging risks to children and ensure that all consent documents are signed by the appropriate people.	
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, ensure that supervision is prioritised during new staff's induction period. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 2772529

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Care (Midlands 1) Limited

Registered provider address: Stepping Stones Care, Camomile House, 6 Embassy Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TP

Responsible individual: Nikita Tidswell

Registered manager: Melena Danvers

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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