

2779744

Registered provider: Step Forward Care Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private provider. It provides care for one child who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

One child was living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager and home were registered in November 2024.

Inspection date: 4 September 2025

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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'.

Findings 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.

Staff ensure that the child has a care plan and risk assessment. Information about the child's needs and risks identified in statutory documents is embedded throughout these plans. This information guides staff to provide the child with personalised care and support that is helping the child to make progress. Relatives and professionals supporting the child positively compliment on the quality of care and relationships that staff have developed with the child.

The manager liaises with the child's local authority to ensure that she has the relevant accompanying statutory documents to inform care planning for the child. One professional said, '[Name of manager] is on my back about the child's education, health and care plan. She is on the ball to ensure that all is in order for the [name of child].'

The child is not accessing formal education. However, the manager is liaising with relevant professionals to develop a plan that meets the child's learning needs. Staff support the child to engage in alternative educational activities in the interim.

There is limited management oversight and investigation of concerns raised by the child. Responses to the child do not help them understand the outcome of their concern. Furthermore, there is minimal oversight when incidents occur. This does not enable the manager to be assured about the effectiveness of staff's practice, make informed decisions, or identify further actions to make improvements. As a result, practice shortfalls are not being directly addressed by the manager, leaving poor practice unresolved.

The manager is reliant on others, such as the independent person, for support in identifying shortfalls. This does not demonstrate effective leadership.

The manager does not always notify the regulator when serious incidents occur, preventing the regulator from having oversight of the management of safeguarding concerns. This includes a medication error. Furthermore, there has been drift and delay in investigating the medication error, which means the situation is not yet resolved. An independent consultant has been commissioned by the provider to conduct an external audit to inform decision-making or the need for any lessons learned.

A recommendation was made at the last inspection regarding the need for a review of the premises to include all known risks in the community, particularly local bridges. This has not yet been completed. However, this is not a current risk for the child living in the home.

There have been changes to the leadership team. The provider has been without a responsible individual for a period. However, one has now been appointed. An external consultant is supporting the manager in the interim. Additionally, there is a new independent person completing external monitoring, which is providing appropriate challenge to the manager regarding the required areas for improvement.

Requirements under regulations 5, engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met, regulation 6, the quality and purpose of care standard, and regulation 14, the quality and purpose of care standard, issued at the last inspection, have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/06/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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— 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	3 October 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there is a review of the location and premises. The review should include the identification of any new risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64 paragraph 15.1)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2779744

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step Forward Care Limited

Registered provider address: 45 Cheswick Drive, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 5DF

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Joanne Reiling

Inspectors

Jess Elliott, Social Care Inspector

Gary Smithson, Social Care Inspector

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