

SC005567

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Services Limited
Interim inspection
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private organisation and offers care and accommodation for four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 17 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The home is run by a suitably qualified and experienced manager who is registered by Ofsted. The registered manager has been in post since August 2013.

Since the last inspection in May 2017, two children have made successful transitions from the home. In accordance with their identified care plans, one young person has successfully been reintegrated back with her immediate family and another young person is now in full-time foster care. There have been two new admissions to the home. At the time of this inspection, the home was accommodating three young people.

Children receive bespoke care which is carefully designed to identify and address their complex attachment needs. Regular individual therapeutic intervention is provided for children by the organisation's psychotherapist. Staff are then supported through clinical

supervision and team meetings in order that they can provide effective nurturing and targeted care. Care plans are regularly updated and progress is tracked on a three-monthly basis, using graphs to identify trigger points or significant changes in children's behaviour. Social workers commented that their children have made significant improvements since living at the home. A child said, 'I like the staff and I like story time. I like the food and my bedroom. I have lots of toys and I like going for walks.'

Children's educational attendance and attainment are consistently good. At the time of the inspection, one child was in full-time education and was making consistent progress. A new admission to the home was awaiting his induction to primary school. He said, 'I am excited to play and have friends and have dinner.' A decision made by the placing authority to obtain accommodation closer to another new admission's family home, has resulted in an education delay. Nonetheless, the staff work consistently to provide daily educational activities with the guidance of the organisation's tutors.

Children are cared for on a one-to-one basis. Daily routines are consistently followed through and this enables children to feel safe and secure in the home. One child said, 'I have a bath every day, I like having a bath, I like play time and story time is my favourite.' Children are extremely active and take part in a range of community activities, for example football, trampolining, boxing, Guides, dancing lessons, horse riding, play dates, soft play and dog walking at the community animal shelter. One child recently won a medal at the boxing club, while another child is a big hit with the animals at the shelter. Children are encouraged to form friendships and invite friends for play dates. This enables children to feel part of the community they live in and this also builds resilience, confidence and self-esteem.

Children who live at this home have complex emotional attachment difficulties. This frequently presents itself through challenging, aggressive or violent behaviour. Consequently, and in accordance with their individual behaviour management plans, young people sometimes need to be held in order to protect them or those around them, and to help them to calm down. Records of such interventions are thorough, and are accompanied by child and staff debriefs and individual key-work sessions. The designated officer said, 'I have no concerns about this home. The registered manager communicates effectively and is always willing to take advice.' However, although there has been a recent reduction in the use of holds within the home, as part of the home's ongoing development, the registered manager should continually review each measure of control against alternative measures. This will help enable children to develop necessary self-regulation skills. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Many of the episodes of restraint are also accompanied by allegations of injury during restraint from children with a previous history of this type of behaviour. The registered manager is able to demonstrate that there is consistent liaison between the designated officer and placing authority with regard to all allegations and the action taken to address each matter is robust and clear.

Individual risk assessments are developed in partnership with the organisation's psychotherapist. They are up to date and signed by all staff. Observations of staff

handovers highlighted the importance given to individual risk factors and how these are planned for during the course of the day and the evening.

The home has experienced some changes in its staff team since the last inspection. Two staff members have commenced maternity leave, one staff member is on long-term sick leave and another staff member is on a phased return. The home uses regular bank staff who are known to the young people living in the home. Additionally, staff from another of the organisation's homes offer frequent support. Two new staff have been recruited, and have commenced their inductions to the home. However, the home remains in need of two full-time staff. At the time of this inspection, the registered manager stated that the organisation had been taken over by a new company, and that an extensive staff recruitment drive was underway. However, the registered manager has recently admitted two children to the home while there are staff shortages. Consequently, children are regularly cared for by staff who are not permanently employed in their home. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Detailed internal and external monitoring of care takes place on a regular basis. Reports offer a holistic review of the services provided for children, and include the home's strengths and areas for development. The registered manager responds quickly to any matters that are highlighted as a result of external monitoring and this is evident through the home's ongoing development of practice and services.

At the last inspection, in May 2017, the home received two recommendations to improve practice. These matters referred to consultation with children and recording of restraint. Both of these matters have been addressed by the home and have been reported on earlier in this report. Two recommendations to further improve practice are made, and refer to staffing levels and the review and reduction of restraints.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2017	Full	Good
18/10/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/04/2016	Full	Requires improvement
24/11/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of behaviour leading to a restraint are subject to regular scrutiny and review in order to reduce such measures in accordance with the developmental needs of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46,

paragraph 9.36)

- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that permanent staff are available to meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Staffing structures should promote continuity of care from a child's perspective. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: SC005567

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Stepping Stones Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, Rawtensall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible individual: Sylvia Eboigbe

Registered manager: Simon Bottomley

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018