

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028868
Inspector	Heather Chaplin
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Step-a-Side Company Limited
Registered person address	29 Market Place COLEFORD Gloucestershire GL16 8AA
Responsible individual	Rachel Emma Carwardine
Registered manager	Lynne Susan Brooks
Date of last inspection	21/05/2014

Inspection date	02/02/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

The home has improved in effectiveness because all young people who have lived there since the previous inspection have made very good progress in comparison with their starting points.

There have been two discharges and two admissions since May 2014. The majority of admissions and discharges take place in a planned and measured manner, but when this is not possible and rapid moves have to take place, the home still achieves positive outcomes under difficult circumstances.

The home looks after young people with highly complex needs. This sometimes leads to very challenging behaviour. Although the home perseveres with young people and does not give up readily, a small number of placements have to be terminated in order to ensure children's welfare and safety. A decision to give notice was appropriate and timely. In spite of not being able to remain in placement, the young person still responded well to the staff's care and achieved good progress in a number of areas. Since leaving, they have written to the manager to say how much they liked being at the home.

Some young people have moved on because they are approaching adulthood. In one young person's case, staff planned progress towards independence very carefully over a period of time. There was excellent collaborative work between the home, the social worker and the parent. This ensured that the young person managed the change well and settled quickly. This young person is now in college, which is an excellent outcome.

Young people benefit from living in a beautiful and inspiring forest environment. The staff work hard to ensure that they are kept busy with plenty of activities, such as cycle rides, walking and visits to various attractions. Newly admitted young people

feel welcome in the home and enjoy attending a community singing and drama group. Some benefit from volunteering for local charities, which also provides the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community. Others enjoy playing sports, and play rugby regularly. They are pleased that their rugby club has done well and has recently received good publicity in the local paper.

Many young people may have very low self-esteem when they arrive, but they have all grown in confidence. They say that they feel happy, safe and secure in the home and told the inspector that they enjoy living there. They value the staff's commitment, kindness and support.

All the young people commented on the choices available to them in the home. They feel valued and consulted. For example, during the inspection, they successfully negotiated swapping their weekly takeaway with a steak dinner on alternate weeks. They know how to raise any concerns about their care.

Some young people are in mainstream school, while others have home tuition. All attend as required, which is a considerable improvement because some young people were not attending school at all before they arrived in the home. Education has been a challenge for some, but the quality of their relationships with staff has helped them to find the confidence to engage with school work. Staff accompany young people to personal education planning meetings to provide support and encouragement. As a result, young people understand the importance of education and are beginning to develop plans for the future. The home has helped young people to have aspirations that they did not have when they arrived.

Young people say that their health care needs are very well met. The home commissions a psychology service to provide skilled professional input into behaviour management plans. Young people receive life story work, specific counselling and relaxation therapy when needed. There is excellent liaison with the relevant CAMHS teams, police and social workers to ensure that young people's needs are met.

There have been no restraints since the last inspection. The home no longer uses sanctions, as staff found that they were much less effective than rewarding positive behaviour. Although the home underwent a period of turbulence after the last inspection and there were some serious incidents, these were managed well. Incidents are always reviewed to ensure that there is learning from each situation.

The Registered Manager is in the process of completing her level 5 management award. This work is now in its final stages and she expects it to be completed in the near future. The manager monitors the quality of care effectively and ensures that staff have a full understanding of the young people's needs. The home is very well led and managed, and this has ensured that positive decisions were made when the situation was challenging. Good management decisions have led to a steady improvement in stability and have ensured that the majority of young people's needs could be met within the home. The situation is now settled.

External monitoring takes place monthly and the reports are used to drive improvement within the home. Regulation 33 reports are clear, detailed and completed in a timely manner. They show evidence of consultation with young people and staff, and make recommendations for improvement when necessary. The home has creative plans for further development. The Registered Manager has undertaken safer recruitment training and is currently helping to interview for new staff. Further staff training is planned. The manager wants to develop the education room to provide additional lounge facilities. There are plans to take two groups of young people on holiday later in the year, to suit their differing individual needs.

The home has good relationships with local emergency services, child and adolescent mental health services and placing authorities. This has enabled them to respond to difficult situations and renegotiate contracts when required, to help to ensure that young people who are struggling can remain in placement.

The home has met the requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection. The manager was asked to complete a risk assessment on the potential for accidental contact with wild boar in the forest around the home. This was completed very quickly after the inspection and has been adopted by a number of other services run by the same company.

The recommendation concerned the need for staff working with young people who had been sexually exploited to receive training in this area of work. Training has been completed for all but the newest member of staff, who is booked to attend later this month.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of two run by a limited company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of four young people, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/05/2014	Full	good
08/01/2014	Interim	good progress
29/05/2013	Full	adequate
30/01/2013	Interim	inadequate progress

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.