

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	02/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC028868
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Step-a-Side Company Limited
Registered person address	Step A Side, 29 Market Place, COLEFORD, Gloucestershire, GL16 8AA

Responsible individual	Ms Rachel Carwardine
Registered manager	Mrs Lynne Brooks
Inspector	Mr Paul Clark

Inspection date	02/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC028868

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home provides young people with an enjoyable physical living environment, rich in resources and amenities where they feel safe and where they enjoy trusting relationships with adults who are committed to their care.
- Young people benefit from a stable care staff team. This gives them consistency and helps them to feel secure. Staff are well trained, supervised and supported. Staff feel that they are competently managed and this ensures that young people receive a high level of care from able and competent practitioners.
- Young people's care planning and needs assessments are of a high quality and the home work closely with placing authorities and other professionals in carrying out these plans. Placing authority social workers describe the quality of communication from the home as exceptional.
- Young people make good progress in their emotional wellbeing and in their behaviour in relation to their starting points. The home ensures that each young person's needs are assessed by a psychologist who sees them on a weekly basis and who works closely with the staff team in providing and reviewing plans of action and support.
- The home is required to ensure that key documents relating to young people's education plans are available in the home.
- The home is required to ensure that notifications to the regulatory body contain action responses taken by the home.
- It is recommended that all young people receive a minimum of 25 hours education each week.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
36: Children's case records. Ensure that the registered person maintains records for each child which includes a copy of any EHC plan (Personal Education Plan). Regulation 36(1) Schedule 3 (17)	01/07/2015
40: Notification of a serious event. Ensure that a notification made under this regulation includes details of any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. Regulation 40(5)(a)	01/07/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Children should be in full time education whilst they are of compulsory school age. Specifically, for a minimum of 25 hours per week. (Paragraph 5.14 of the Quality Standards)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a small, locally-based private company, which also operates another children's home in the area. The company also provides domiciliary care services for young people and homes for disabled adults, which are separately regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission.

The children's home currently provides long-term care for a maximum of four young people, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2015	CH – Interim	Improved Effectiveness
21/05/2014	CH – Full	Good
08/01/2014	CH – Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
In relation to their starting points at the time of admission to the home young people make good progress in their physical, emotional and social development. This is achieved by good assessments of need, care planning and review and in the rigorous implementation of these plans. Young people's care is individualised and is coordinated by key workers who have a sound knowledge of a young person's background and their assessed and ongoing needs. This knowledge is shared with all members of the staff group. The majority of the staff group have several years of experience in residential child care work. Staff are well inducted and undertake further training in the core elements of their work. They feel well supervised and supported and this means that young people are well cared for by able and well informed practitioners. Young people told the inspector that they enjoy living in the home and say that they have good relationships with staff members. Many of the young people have experienced unsuccessful models of parenting and having good staff relationships helps them to develop trust in adults and feelings of security in their lives. Young people are supported by the home in engaging in a range of educative, leisure and recreational activities which they have not had access to previously. These include such activities as drama and dance clubs, playing and watching football and rugby matches, and enjoying meals out. This enhances their life experiences and helps them connect to the local and wider community. The home works hard to ensure that the health, educational, social and psychological development of young people is progressed and this is achieved to some degree. The home ensures that all young people are registered with a general practitioner, dentist and optician and that routine checks ups are carried out. Staff have a good knowledge of the medication needs of individual children and the effects of these medications. The home arranges for each young person to have a weekly session with a psychologist to assist them with an understanding of their backgrounds, to help them manage their emotions, and to progress behaviourally. None of the young people attend full time education, or attend education for the minimum 25 hours per week. However, in relation to their starting points	

some have made considerable educational progress and are supported by the care staff team in maximising their educational potential.

Young people enjoy living in a cottage style home in a tranquil, rural setting. The gardens are extensive and well-tended. The home is comfortable, well-maintained and decorated. Young people can personalise their bedrooms according to their own taste and each young person has a bedroom key. This ensures privacy and gives each young person a private space. There is evidence of a vast array of leisure and recreation play facilities being available which are appropriate to the ages of the young people placed.

The service actively supports the placing authority plans for the next stage in young people's lives and makes effective arrangements for young people's transitions when leaving the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
All of the young people living in the home say that they feel very safe and say that they know that staff are there to protect them. The home's child protection policy and procedure is known by all staff who each receive regular and effective training in these procedures and in other areas which help to keep the young people safe. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has no concerns about the home and reports good interagency safeguarding practice. A particular strength of the home is the active behaviour support programme which sets distinct behaviour management plans for each young person. The home employs a behavioural psychologist who constructs and reviews a young person's plan in collaboration with managers and key workers. This includes individual risk assessments for each young person. These measures help to ensure that young people have more control of their emotions and behaviour whilst living in the home. In addition to the behaviour support plans, individual sessional work by key workers helps young people to understand their risk assessments and their care and placement plans. Although key workers coordinate these plans for individual young people the whole of the staff team demonstrate a good understanding of each young person's individual care needs. For one young person who has a history of self-harming, a suicide risk assessment has been	

put in place and the home has used innovative measures to help this young person gain more control over their emotions. This has included working with the young person to set up an 'avoiding self-harm box' which the young person fills with items of comfort and accesses these when they feel low in mood.

Staff receive regular training in the use of restraint. In the context of the starting points of some of the young people placed, incidents requiring the use of physical restraint are low and are reducing. These incidents are subject to proper analysis by the staff team and are discussed with the young person concerned. Any sanctions applied are proportionate and appropriate. This ensures that young people are included in the self-management of their needs and in their individual progress.

Young people know the procedure for making a complaint and they have a number of forums available where they can raise any concerns about their care. These include, key workers, weekly house meetings, independent visitors, social workers and independent reviewing officers at their review meetings. Two complaints have been raised by young people since the time of the previous inspection and both of these were acted upon appropriately by the home.

The home takes a careful account of the characteristics and needs of each young person placed to ensure that the group of young people are well balanced. There is currently a vacant room in the home which the home will leave vacant until a new admission can be found who will blend appropriately with the other young people and the living environment. This ensures consistency for the young people and minimalizes disruption in their lives.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are low and since the time of the previous inspection one young person has gone missing on two occasions, both for short periods of time. There is a protocol in place with the local police to be followed in the event of a child going missing.

Staff continually support young people in being involved in activities, clubs and societies in the local community and will accompany them in these undertakings. The home ensures that the risks of the living environment and the locality are minimized by active fire safety measures, effective food hygiene and environment health practices, and the production of risk assessments in this regard which ensure that every possible risk is considered.

There are thorough vetting and recruitment checks on all staff and young people are involved in the staff recruitment process. There is a high level of vigilance about young people's contact with adults who come to the home or who they may meet in the community, including school taxi and transport

services. Each of the home's vehicles has a device which speed tracks their use to ensure that the staff drive them safely. These measures help to ensure that young people are kept safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
There is consistent and strong leadership in the home. The registered manager has been in post for two years. This provides consistency for young people, other professionals, and staff. The registered manager is appropriately qualified and has many years of experience in residential work with children and young people. All staff members have an appropriate qualification in working with children and young people and several staff are supported by the organisation in undertaking higher level awards. This helps to ensure that young people are cared for by a competent and able staff group. New staff appointments undertake an induction programme which covers all of the key elements of their work. Staff receive ongoing training in all of the core areas of work which impact on the care of young people and this training is regularly updated. The manager ensures that staff receive regular supervision and team meeting support, and there are staff hand over meetings between working shifts. These measures help to ensure that young people's needs and their ongoing progress is well understood by each member of the staff team. The aims and objectives of the home are clearly and accurately spelt out in its statement of purpose. Young people are provided with information about the home and their care in a children's guide. Both of these documents are comprehensive in content and regularly reviewed and updated. This ensures that young people and stakeholders are kept well informed about the care provided. Staff will go through the children's guide with individual young people upon admission to further affect this. Placing authorities comment favourably on the high levels of communication they receive from the home, and the high standard of care planning and preparation for review meetings. Young people's care plans and the home's	

placement plans are detailed, up to date and well ordered. However, one young person's education plan was not available and there was no evidence that the home had requested this from the placing authority. This may mean that staff may not have immediate access to important documentation about young people and this could result in errors of assessment of need.

Internal and external managerial monitoring of the function of the home is rigorous. Monthly visit reports conducted by independent visitors are comprehensive and recommendations made therein are swiftly acted upon. Reviews of the quality of care are conducted in consultation with young people and all stakeholders. Young people have the opportunity to comment on the service at weekly house meetings, meetings with their key workers, independent visitors, their review meetings and in meetings with their placing social workers and independent reviewing officers. The reviews of the quality of care clearly outline areas of necessary service development. The manager has used areas of research to improve the level of service provided. One example of this is the innovative work done with young people who self-harm. The home keeps the regulatory body informed of any matters that need to be notified by regulation and responds quickly to improve areas of service provision that these notifications identify. However, the notifications do not set out for the regulatory body the action that the home has taken in response to the events notified and this raises the possibility of breach of regulation.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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