

SC028868

Registered provider: Step-a-Side Company Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to four children. It is owned and managed by a private company. The home is led by an experienced and qualified registered manager, who has been the registered manager of the home since October 2013.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 4 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2017	Full	Good
26/10/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	Good
11/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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
11: The positive relationships standard The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— - mutual respect and trust; - an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— - that staff— - encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; - help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; and - communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)) In particular, staff are required to continue to implement boundaries, promote positive behaviour and provide continuity of care and support, so that these practices become embedded.	30/06/2018
12: The protection of children standard 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— - take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and - are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.	30/06/2018

(Regulation 12(1), (2)(a)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that issues in relation to safeguarding and the safety and welfare of children are referred to relevant safeguarding agencies, including the local authority.	
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a), (2)(c)) In particular, ensure that all staff read children's placement plans, risk assessments and therapeutic support plans. In addition, ensure that the recently devised therapeutic support plan for one child is implemented.	30/06/2018
16: Statement of purpose The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	30/06/2018
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that all staff receive training in understanding attachments, supporting children who self-harm and protecting children from exploitation.	31/07/2018
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')— has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(b)(i))	30/06/2018

40: Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(c)(e))	30/06/2018
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Recommendations

- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)

In particular, consider ways in which these activities can be captured, such as photographs that can be shared with children and their parents.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Outcomes for children are mixed. There are some weaknesses in safeguarding practice and the management of behaviours.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved out of the home. Despite staff taking effective action to keep these children safe, the risks remained too high. As a result, staff were unable to successfully devise strategies to manage the difficult behaviours and the ongoing risks. Before the children moved, the actions of one child had a negative impact on another child.

Children who are currently living at the home say that they are happy there. They say that they like the staff and feel listened to. A child said, 'It's a good home, it's just that I've outgrown it. I have learned independence skills, and now want to become more independent.' A child regularly visits his family at the weekend and is becoming more confident in using public transport.

Staff engage with children in a professional and caring manner. They develop good relationships with children and demonstrate genuine care.

Children enjoy the activities that are provided. One child loves visiting a local trampoline centre. However, staff do not capture these experiences in such a way that children can create memories which they can take home and share with their parents and families.

Children are encouraged to visit the home prior to moving in. However, a child who recently moved into the home did not wish to visit. Staff ensured that he was provided with information about the home and was welcomed by the staff when he arrived. The registered manager undertakes a comprehensive compatibility risk assessment prior to children moving into the home. This ensures that the home can meet the individual and collective needs of the children.

Children are attending education that aims to meet their specific needs. Staff encourage and support children to attend school. The registered manager has aspirations for one child to attend a mainstream school. This option is currently being explored in consultation with the child and his social worker.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Practices for managing safeguarding concerns are variable. The registered manager has failed to follow child protection procedures correctly and seek advice from the designated officer when a child has made allegations against staff.

In contrast, the registered manager works closely with other agencies and professionals

when there is a suspicion of children being sexually exploited while they are missing. Good audit trails are maintained to demonstrate the action that has been taken in relation to this.

The management of difficult behaviour needs improving. A therapeutic support plan to help staff to manage a child's behaviours has been devised but not yet implemented. As a result, some high-risk behaviours are continuing. For example, at the time of this inspection a child climbed on the home's vehicle and jumped up and down on the bonnet and roof, threw items around the lounge and made verbal threats to staff. On occasion, the child refuses to engage with some staff. Strategies to support the child are yet to be embedded in practice.

Restraint is rarely used. However, on two occasions insufficient de-escalation strategies were used before restraint was implemented. The registered manager has recognised this as poor practice and taken effective action to address this. Children are given the chance to express their views on the measures used. However, the registered manager confirms that she has not always recorded the debriefing discussion held with staff.

Staff take effective action when children go missing. The registered manager and staff work together with other safeguarding agencies and authorities to ensure that children return home safely.

Children say that they feel safe at the home. The social workers echo this.

Children are safeguarded by an effective recruitment and selection process.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Some staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual needs and how these are to be met. However, the registered manager has failed to ensure that all staff have read one child's placement plan, risk assessments and therapeutic support plan. These documents are pivotal to the child receiving consistent care and support.

Leaders and managers have not notified Ofsted promptly about serious events or about allegations made against staff. Neither has Ofsted been sent an up-to-date statement of purpose.

Visits by the independent visitor take place regularly. The registered manager responds effectively to the recommendations made. The registered manager has undertaken a detailed review of the quality of care provided in the home. She has accurately identified most of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and developed an action plan to improve further.

Staff receive a wide range of training to ensure that they can meet the needs of the children. However, records do not confirm that all staff have undertaken specific training in understanding attachments, supporting children who self-harm and protecting children from exploitation.

The registered manager takes effective action when children make a complaint.

Staff say that they feel supported by the registered manager and senior managers in the organisation. They say that there is always someone to speak to in case of an emergency and to seek advice. A member of staff said that they do not have a mobile phone to take out with them in case of an emergency. The registered manager confirmed that a mobile phone is available.

The two requirements that were made at the last inspection have been met.

Social workers and the independent psychologists speak well of the care and support that are provided at the home. A social worker said, 'It is early days, but things are going well'.

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 difference 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.

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: SC028868

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step-a-Side Company Limited

Registered provider address: Step-a-Side, 29 Market Place, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8AA

Responsible individual: Rachel Carwardine

Registered manager: Lynne Brooks

Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector

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