

SC028868

Registered provider: Step-a-Side Company Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care for up to four children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children who have a variety of complex needs. At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since July 2020.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 3 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/08/2021	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Good
23/04/2019	Full	Inadequate
04/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children say that they feel safe and enjoy living in the home. Despite some challenges of group living, overall, children say that they get along with each other 'OK'.

Staff have built positive relationships with children. Interactions between staff and children are kind, warm and good humoured. On occasions when children swear or make inappropriate comments, staff encourage children to express themselves in a more socially acceptable manner.

Children have made progress since moving to this home. However, not enough is being done to support their educational attainment. Plans to support education are vague and lack ambition. Children are not attending full-time education and there are minimal educational opportunities provided outside of formal learning. As a result, children are not sufficiently supported to maximise their educational achievement.

Care plans provide staff with an overview of most of the needs of children. However, plans lack some information about how staff are supporting children to keep themselves safe.

Feedback from parents and professionals is mostly positive. There is good communication, and staff genuinely care for the children they look after. However, concerns were raised about a lack of educational ambition, aspiration and support.

Children are supported to see their friends and family. When challenges have arisen, staff have responded proactively to mediate risk. This has supported children to develop positive relationships with the people that are important to them. Children have also been provided with positive experiences, including downhill bike riding, bowling, going to the cinema and eating meals out.

The environment is mostly well presented and feels homely. However, the external games room is cluttered and lacks personalisation. Children's bedrooms are personalised, with furniture chosen by them. Overall, the home is comfy and welcoming.

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

Despite the complex needs of children, staff have given them the right support to help reduce some risky behaviours. Consequently, one child has decided that he no

longer wants to smoke or use drugs. He has also distanced himself from risks associated with exploitation and county lines.

When children go missing from home, staff take action to help return them to the home swiftly and safely. Staff search the local area and ensure regular communication with the local police, placing authority and parents. Return home interviews are arranged and take place. However, no information following return home interviews is shared with managers or staff. As a result, there is limited reflection or learning about how to keep children safe in the future. Debriefs with children also lack curiosity about how to support children effectively and prevent further incidents.

The response to most child protection concerns is robust. The home seeks the involvement of external professionals to inform safety planning. Where appropriate, regular multi-agency safety meetings are held. However, the response to one concern raised by a child was insufficient and lacked professional curiosity. On this occasion, this did not result in harm to the child, but this was not explored at the time.

Physical intervention has been used by staff to prevent harm to others. However, debriefs with staff and children tend to restate a factual account of what happened rather than focus on learning or identifying what could have been done differently.

When significant concerns have been raised, the registered manager has considered whether the home can continue to meet the needs of children and keep them safe. Concerns have been shared to gather the views of leaders and managers, placing authorities, psychological services and children. Leaders and managers have carefully considered the matching process and risk assessment of any potential new children who may move into the home in the future.

The registered manager has recognised when relationships and antisocial behaviour may be of concern. The involvement of other professionals has led to the reassessment of risk, which will be used to inform care planning and intervention. This is in its infancy and could not be assessed for effectiveness during the current inspection. In the interim, risk assessments have been updated to highlight locations of concern in the area so that they can be avoided.

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

Staff say that they feel supported, and that leaders and managers are approachable. Staff understand how to support children and enjoy their work in the home.

Leaders and managers monitor the home and have a good understanding of the needs of children and how to support them. However, the home's development plan is out of date, and managers review of the quality-of-care lacks sufficient critical analysis and evaluation. Following events that have challenged staff, leaders and managers are not always clear about what happened, or why it happened. As a

result, reflection and learning have not always been used effectively to inform care planning. However, some actions have been identified to prevent and mediate future challenges. These are not always recorded. When they have been recorded, actions are sometimes vague and do not provide sufficient information about how they will be achieved, who is responsible or when they will be completed. This means that it is not always clear how staff support children.

The home's training matrix highlights the extensive training opportunities provided to staff. Staff training seeks to meet the individual needs of children and supports staff to respond effectively in the moment. However, the training matrix contains some inconsistencies and leaders and managers are not easily able to identify training needs.

Staff supervision encourages reflection of staff practice and the care provided to children. However, there is little evidence of how this is then used to inform care planning.

The registered manager has been able to challenge external professionals when services have not met the required standard. However, more challenge is required to ensure all professionals are ambitious for children.

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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that there are clear and ambitious plans to promote children's educational attainment. In addition, the registered person should ensure that children are provided with educational activities that inspire them to achieve in education.	01 February 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that feedback from return home interviews is shared and used to inform care planning.	30 January 2023
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	13 February 2023

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that reflection and learning seek to identify strategies for staff to support children and keep them safe. In addition, the registered person should ensure that leaders and managers respond to all safeguarding concerns effectively. This specifically relates to seeking children’s views and wishes when concerns are raised.	
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—	13 February 2023

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

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))

In particular, the registered person should ensure that oversight and monitoring promote improvements and developments to be made to the quality of care.

In addition, the registered person should use reflection and learning to inform the care provided to children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Tracy Bedford

Inspector

Martin Brown, Social Care Inspector

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