

SC028868

Registered provider: Step-a-Side Company Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider. The provider states in the home's statement of purpose that care is provided for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. During the previous inspection, two children were living in the home. However, one child has since moved out.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection date: 15 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home. The registered manager encountered difficulties when supporting this move, due to uncertain plans from external professionals. However, staff were able to provide positive experiences for the child before he moved out. For example, staff took the child out for a farewell meal and provided him with keepsakes to help him remember his time in the home. The registered manager has remained available to support the child and his family since his move. Leaders and managers raised concerns with the relevant agencies about how the move was managed during and after it took place.

Some progress has been made with regards to the educational engagement of the child living in the home. He has doubled the number of tutoring hours he engages in each week, and there are plans to increase this time further. With the support of staff, the child is also working towards an educational qualification in addition to the tutoring. A weekly education timetable is planned with staff, who also support the child to read each day and develop his independence skills. The registered manager is mindful of the emotional impact of increased educational commitments on the child, while being aware that full-time education is important for positive educational outcomes.

The child says that he enjoys living in the home and that the staff are good and listen to him. He describes the staff as 'nice' and 'kind' and says that it feels like 'living with a family'. The child recognises the progress he has made with his education and is proud of his achievements, as are the staff. The child is looking forward to upcoming African drumming lessons and is on a waiting list to attend a local music studio.

The environment is mostly warm and homely, and further refurbishment is planned. Clutter has been removed from the games room, and some carpets and furniture in the home have been replaced. Fire signs and window restrictors remain in place, which detracts from the overall homeliness of the environment. Furthermore, not all photos on the walls provide positive messages to children. The manager plans to change this when more suitable photos are taken.

The safety of children

The registered manager and staff have responded to safeguarding concerns effectively to help children to keep safe. After children have been missing from the home, the registered manager has endeavoured to identify learning from return home interviews and has shared this with the staff team. Actions to prevent future

occurrences are often identified. Leaders and managers recognised when they were not able to keep one child safe and took appropriate steps to address this.

Staff are confident that children are kept safe. Meaningful conversations have been used to provide children with positive messages, particularly when helping them to express difficult emotions in safer ways. Staff can identify safeguarding concerns and know how to respond or where to find the information they require to guide their practice.

Care plans provide staff with the strategies they need to keep children safe. Some care plans are very detailed and contain lots of information, while others are more succinct and accessible. Risk assessments in plans support staff to help children identify risk and how to mediate it. Plans are informed by clinical input from the home's psychology service.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have taken appropriate steps to address the requirements from the last inspection. The registered manager has implemented a development plan which identifies further areas for improvement and how they will be addressed. Staff recognise the improvements that have been made since the last inspection.

The registered manager has improved their oversight of the home. This has helped the registered manager to learn from events that have challenged staff and identify actions to support them in the future. Staff are provided with a range of training opportunities to help support the child they care for. Training is relevant to the specific needs of the child living in the home. As a result, staff can meet the child's needs.

Despite a difficult couple of months, the registered manager has responded well to the feedback provided at the last inspection. The registered manager has a good understanding of the needs of the child they care for and feels supported by the provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/08/2021	Full	Good
06/08/2019	Full	Good
23/04/2019	Full	Inadequate

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression throughout the home. In particular, the registered person should review the use of, and remove where possible, unnecessary fire signs and window restrictors. In addition, the registered person should ensure that photos on the walls are suitable and provide positive messages to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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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