

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 is owned by a private company. It is registered for up to four children aged up to 18 who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2013.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 April 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 4 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/07/2017	Full	Good
26/10/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	Good

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 quality and purpose of care standard. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the home is decorated to a good standard, and is well maintained and free from institutional aspects throughout.	16/08/2019
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— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; and 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 and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that	14/06/2019

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.	
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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff follow the correct safeguarding procedures and whistleblowing policy to protect children.	16/06/2019
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and 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; 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)(c)(f)(h))	16/08/2019

In particular, ensure that the manager is able to recognise and address shortfalls to improve the quality of care provided to children and that all staff receive training in the 'Prevent' duty and county lines.	
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)) This is with reference to ensuring that children are not restrained to enforce compliance such as removing them from the 'office' area.	14/06/2019
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that internal doors are not locked so that children's liberty and movement are not restricted.	14/06/2019
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, which is— the Level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the Level 3 diploma'); or	14/06/2019

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 diploma, by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	
The registered person must notify, without delay, the local authority for the area in which the children's home is located of every admission of a child into the home and every discharge of a child from the home. (Regulation 41(1))	14/06/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant shortfalls in leadership and management and failings in the help, protection and care provided to children have resulted in a judgement of inadequate for this home.

Although children say that they like living in the home and although they have made progress in some areas, their overall experiences since the previous inspection have been negatively affected by poor leadership and limited aspirations of staff. During this inspection, young people told the inspector that they were bored. Observations of interactions between staff and young people showed a lack of drive in positively engaging young people in activities. Staff do not regularly use planned opportunities like key-working sessions to help young people to achieve their individual care plan objectives.

The home requires considerable redecoration and modernisation. Internal doors are not domestic in style, have inappropriate locks and many are damaged. This gives the home an institutionalised environment. Staff do not take enough action to ensure that the home and young people's bedrooms are kept tidy, clean and organised. Staff do not dispose appropriately of cigarette ends, often discarding them by the gate. One young person's bedroom has graffiti on the door and the shower room is worn. This does not provide a warm and homely environment for young people to live in.

Young people cannot move freely around the home as required. Doors in the home are routinely locked, including the door to the kitchen, and a window has been sealed shut. Staff use these restrictive practices to manage young people's behaviour and have not been proactive in introducing more creative and compassionate solutions. This approach limits the opportunity to help young people to learn positive strategies to manage feelings of anger and upset.

Because staff do not have secure and trusted relationships with young people, they are unable to prevent the young people's anti-social behaviour. During one serious incident, two young people took the home's car and drove it round the grounds of the home. Staff were unable to deescalate this incident safely themselves or prevent it from happening.

The police were called to assist, and both young people were arrested. Poor management of young people's behaviour was also a concern at the inspection in 2018.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Young people are not safeguarded effectively. Staff have completed safeguarding training, but they do not always follow procedures to respond to child protection concerns or whistleblowing incidents. Physical restraint is not always used appropriately. During one incident, a young person was injured and verbally abused by a staff member. This was not reported to senior managers by staff who witnessed the incident. Consequently, the staff member continued to work at the home overnight, and this left the young person at potential risk of further harm. Senior managers responded appropriately when informed. Nevertheless, the young person's welfare was not prioritised at the time.

Young people say that they like living at this home and do not have any complaints about the quality of care. However, the quality of care is not good enough, and leaders and managers have not taken enough action to prevent this. Staff are not engaging with or promoting positive behaviour approaches to young people. Although restraint is not used regularly, poor practice concerns are evident in all of the instances when restraint has been used. For example, during one incident a young person was injured when staff used an inappropriate technique, and on three occasions, staff physically removed young people from the home's office when there was no risk of harm. Using this approach means that incidents escalate and there is risk of injury to young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management is weak. Important areas of shortfalls identified at the last inspection have not been addressed. For example, breaches in regulations relating to the protection of children and positive relationships standards remain evident at this inspection.

There are significant shortfalls in the overall scrutiny and monitoring of the quality of care offered in this home. Managers were not aware that physical restraint was used inappropriately by staff, for example in forcing young people to comply with instructions to leave the home's office. Managers had not identified or recognised serious shortfalls within the day-to-day management of young people's behaviour.

Leaders and managers did not take enough action to prevent a young person being injured during a restraint and to prevent it from happening again. Previous concerns with the staff member involved were not acted on by the manager and a review of lessons learned has not been completed.

The quality of care review completed by the manager is ineffective. It fails to evaluate young people's complaints, staff training needs and safeguarding shortfalls. The written report includes a number of errors. The quality of care is unlikely to improve because internal and external monitoring is weak.

Some staff lack the necessary training and skills to meet the needs of and safeguard the young people in their care. The manager has not ensured that two staff who have successfully completed their probation period have been promptly enrolled on the level 3 diploma for residential childcare. Staff have not been provided with training in the 'Prevent' duty or about the risks of county lines.

Staff do not receive regular, good-quality supervision with clearly recorded outcomes for development. Consequently, staff are not supported well enough to develop the required skills or ensure that a high standard of care is provided.

The manager was not aware that she routinely needs to notify the host authority when a young person moves into the area, despite this being a requirement of the children's home regulations. This could place young people at risk if multi-agency planning does not take place to promote their welfare.

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 differences 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: 29 Market Place, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8AA

Responsible individual: Rachel Carwardine

Registered manager: Lynne Brooks

Inspector

Anna Gravelle, social care inspector

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