

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	26 April 2016
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	Rachel Carwardine
Registered manager	Lynne Brooks
Inspector	Paul Clark

Inspection date	26 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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:

- Young people have made excellent progress educationally, with achievements being above expectation and all young people now being in full-time education.
- Transitional arrangements for young people leaving the home are well thought out and comprehensive.
- Excellent arrangements are in place to support young people's emotional well-being. This is provided by weekly sessions with the agency's psychologist, whose progress reviews are shared with the overall care staff team, ensuring the delivery of uniform care practice.
- The young people living in the home enjoy living there and say that they feel safe.
- Young people are given a range of opportunities to engage in wider society and in the larger community. They are able to participate in healthy and worthwhile activities and this enhances their life experiences.
- Staff are well supervised, supported and trained.
- The management and monitoring of the service is strong and this leads to effective service development and improvement.
- There are no incidents of the young people currently living in the home going missing, and there are good arrangements in place with the local police to search for young people should this occur.
- Although the overall provision of this children's home is good, the behaviour management of the extreme behaviours of some young people needs to be addressed. Other than this, behaviour management practice is well thought out, with staff being appropriately trained in understanding the relationships between a young person's experiences of attachment and loss and their presenting behaviours. Staff are appropriately trained in methods of restraint, and there is an appropriate use of reward and sanction.

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

Recommendations

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

- The positive relationships standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11(2)(a)(i))

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. These are separately regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission.

The 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
11 November 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
2 June 2015	Full	Good
2 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21 May 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The overall experiences and progress of young people living in this home are good because young people's social and psychological, health, and educational needs have been properly assessed and addressed, and their progress in these areas has improved. The behavioural progress of young people has varied, with some young people making exceptional progress, while others have made only mild progress in this regard. All young people are registered with a general practitioner, optician and dentist, and routine checks are carried out. While the general health of the young people is good, one young person has been seen by the doctor for weight loss. This has improved due to the home's careful observance of their diet. All young people receive weekly sessions with the agency's psychologist, who reviews their emotional well-being. Changes based on these reviews are shared with the care staff team and this provides a uniform approach to the care and support of young people. Young people living in the home have made remarkable progress educationally. One young person who had a starting point of having been assessed as having special educational needs has achieved three GCSEs and is now attending a college course. Good transitional arrangements are in place for this young person to move from the home and into a fostering placement. Another young person, whose starting point was that they were refusing home tutoring, is now attending school full time, is engaging in their education, and has been made a school prefect. Young people are encouraged to engage in activities outside the home, some individually, others with the support of staff. These activities include swimming, pilates and meals out. One young person is a member of St John's Ambulance and also works as a volunteer at a local hairdresser. One of the young people enjoyed a holiday in Spain last summer, supported by staff members. These opportunities enhance young people's life experiences and improve their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Young people are provided with a range of opportunities to have a say in their individual care, and in the development of the service. These are provided by weekly key worker sessions, weekly sessions with a psychologist, visits from their placing authority social workers, care plan review meetings and monthly meetings with an independent visitor. These meetings also provide an opportunity for the home to work with other professionals in helping young people to understand their	

life histories and family relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The way that this home helps and protects young people is good, because careful attention is paid by the home to assessing any risks to young people that might exist, including the risks that they might present to themselves and others. Care plans and risk assessments are regularly reviewed in the light of events and changes in young people's lives. These risk assessments include a locality risk assessment, which is reviewed annually. In addition to protecting young people, this also gives staff clear guidance on how to provide the best care for young people. Where extreme behaviours present a risk to other young people, contingency plans and increased staffing levels are put in place, and this helps to minimise the likelihood of harm. Staff training on safeguarding children and in methods of restraint are regularly updated. However, although sanctions, and other forms of appropriate behaviour management, are in place, and staff are well trained in these areas, they need to be improved for individual young people whose behaviour is occasionally extreme. Sanctions applied are restorative and not over-disciplinarian and the young people see them as fair. This helps young people to foster good relationships with staff and gives them a sense of personal responsibility. Young people say that they have good relationships with staff, and that they feel safe and enjoy living in the home. One independent reviewing officer said 'The young person trusts the staff and feels that she can rely on them.' A young person also told the inspector 'I really love this home.' In spite of the home's location being extremely rural, the young people are given numerous opportunities to engage in the local community and to improve their life experiences by joining clubs and societies, such as St John's Ambulance, and by doing voluntary jobs. The home puts measures in place to ensure young people's safety when undertaking activities away from the home, and they liaise well with placing authority social workers in the assessment of risk in this regard. This is balanced by allowing young people to take age-appropriate risks when participating in these activities. Each young person has a key worker who has a full knowledge of the young person's care needs and who will meet with the young person on a weekly basis to discuss any concerns that the young person may have. This helps to support and protect them. Additionally, the children's guide informs young people about avenues of support and how they can access the home's complaints procedure. There have been no instances of the young people currently placed going missing,	

and there are good arrangements in place with the local police to search for young people should this occur. The home has a clear policy on the action to be taken by staff should any young person go missing from the home.

Staff records indicate that staff are carefully selected and vetted, and there are ongoing routine checks carried out to ensure that unsuitable people are not given the opportunity to harm young people, or to put them at risk. These checks include speed limit logging of the home's vehicles. Evidence was seen of written warnings being given to members of staff who have breached the speed limits set by the agency on their vehicles. The local authority designated officer reports that there are no current, or recent, safeguarding concerns about staff in this home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The impact and effectiveness of the leaders and managers of this home are good. This is achieved by the registered manager of the home being suitably qualified and experienced, and having a good oversight of the assessed needs of each child placed. One young person who has been placed long term has shown a remarkable improvement in their educational and social skills in relation to their starting point. Staff confirm that they receive supervision at least monthly. Team meetings are held every three weeks, and there are monthly team clinical supervision sessions which are conducted by the agency psychologist, and which review each young person's progress in relation to their care plan. Staff training records and verbal discussions with staff confirm that they receive regular and ongoing training in all key areas of their roles. The majority of staff have the appropriate professional qualification for their job. This ensures that young people receive a good level of care from staff trained in the specific skills needed to enable them to work effectively with young people. The statement of purpose accurately describes the aims and objectives of the home and the kind of care provided. Children's guides are written in an appropriate format and give young people full information about the home and where they can go to get help. Recorded evidence is in place in a complaints record log that shows that young people have accessed the complaints procedure, and that the home has taken appropriate actions in response to complaints that young people have made. Both the statement of purpose and children's guides are reviewed annually, and this ensures that all stakeholders have up-to-date information about the home. An independent visitor conducts monthly visits to the home and reports on their findings. These visits include interviews with the young people placed, which	

includes asking them how they feel about the quality of their care. Young people also have the opportunity to express their views about their care at their weekly key worker sessions, at their meetings with their social worker and at their care plan review meetings. There is evidence that any recommendations made by the independent visitor have been acted upon. The manager of the home also conducts a six-monthly review of the quality of care. Evidence was seen that the recommendations made at the last review have been implemented. These include the completion of all mandatory staff training, house redecoration and a formal meeting with the local police to update them on the current group of young people. This demonstrates that the management of the home actively and routinely monitors and improves the quality of care.

The manager of the home notifies all appropriate agencies about any incidents or events as required by regulation, together with a clear description of the action that the home has taken with regard to these.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the previous inspection conducted by the regulatory body.

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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