

1271182

Registered provider: Step Up Children and Family Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | good |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 27/07/2022 | Full | Good |
| 01/11/2021 | Full | Good |
| 04/12/2019 | Full | Good |
| 08/08/2018 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were four children living at the home at the time of this inspection. The staff know the children well and there are positive relationships between staff and children.

Children all engage in learning. Staff encourage school attendance. For children who do not have educational provision, staff support them with education at the home each day. This helps children with their academic development and provides a daily routine.

Staff support children with their family relationships, in accordance with their circumstances. There is a family support coordinator who supports the relationships between children and their families. One child's time with their parent has recently moved from a contact centre to being supervised by staff. This means that the contact between the child and their family can be more natural.

The staff use a reward programme for each child. Children are involved in setting their own targets, which focus on areas of development for the child. Children can choose the rewards they receive. Through these incentives, the rewards programme has improved children's personal hygiene and increased their independence skills.

Children's health is supported. A counsellor visits the home regularly to offer counselling sessions to the children. Staff are aware of children's dietary needs and support when there are concerns around food. One child had previously not engaged with dental appointments but has now successfully undergone a course of dental treatment which has improved their dental hygiene.

One child moved out of the home quickly and in an unplanned way after moving in. The manager made the decision due to the level of risk. They raised concerns with the placing authority about the lack of information in the referral paperwork. The manager has reflected on the situation and identified some lessons learned from this situation. The manager has made amendments to the referral process before children move into the home, to prevent further unplanned endings.

The house is homely and welcoming. There are photos of children and staff, which supports children's sense of belonging. There has been some redecoration recently and there are further plans to improve the interior decor.

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

Staff understand children's past experiences and any risks they may face. Staff talk to children and support them to understand and reduce the risks. At times, the staff arrange for a local police officer to speak to children to support them to understand the possible consequences of their actions.

Staff follow the home's protocols when a child is missing from the home. They make numerous attempts to contact the child and their family when they do not know a child's whereabouts. Staff are aware of the reasons why children have been missing and use this information to reduce incidents.

There has been one physical restraint. Restraint is not usually used in a planned approach because staff are not trained to use restraint. On one occasion, staff had to intervene to ensure a child's safety as the child was placing themselves at significant risk. The use of physical intervention was proportionate and the staff received a debrief following its use.

Safer recruitment is followed for new members of staff. There is an induction process for new staff, which helps them to learn their roles.

Allegations against staff are not always managed appropriately. One child made an allegation which is recorded on a missing-from-home incident form. There is no evidence of the action taken following this allegation being made. The manager explained that a conversation took place with the child's social worker but there is no record to confirm this. The management comments on the incident form do not acknowledge the allegation being made. This means that there is a lack of follow-up to allegations, which could place children at risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and qualified. She knows the children well, understands the progress they make and has high aspirations for them. Staff speak positively about the management support they receive.

External professionals say communication is good and that the staff know the children well. The manager challenged a placing authority when there were concerns about lack of education provision for one child. She supported the child to write a letter outlining the concerns, which was sent to the placing authority. This led to a school place being found for the child and they have now started attending.

Supervision sessions take place regularly. The manager uses supervision sessions to support staff's learning and to ensure staff have the required knowledge and skills and an understanding of their roles. This supports staff to develop their knowledge and reflect on their practice.

Appraisals are held for staff. However, they lack feedback from professionals and children. This means there is no objective overview of the staff member's performance and their areas for development.

The manager's quality of care review does not include feedback from staff, families or professionals. The manager has now included some feedback from children. However, the lack of staff and external feedback limits the ability to identify and drive improvements.

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, The 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 |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that allegations made by children are appropriately reported and the actions are recorded. Ensure there is clear management oversight of the management of allegations.</p> | 26 January 2024 |
| <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, consult with families, placing authorities and staff as part of the review of the quality of care.</p> | 9 February 2024 |

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care are included in annual appraisals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 1271182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Step Up Children and Family Services Limited

Registered provider address: 742 New Hey Road, Huddersfield HD3 3YQ

Responsible individual: Stephen Graley

Registered manager: Megan Warden

Inspector

Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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