

SC034797

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council Children's Services

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides medium- to long-term residential care for up to four children who have experienced trauma and may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse.

The registered manager left in July 2019. There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 8 January 2020

Date of last inspection: 4 April 2019

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

At the last inspection, concerns about placement suitability and the appropriate matching of new children resulted in two requirements being raised. These requirements have not been met and are therefore repeated. Overall, the quality of care has declined. Consequently, this inspection raises six requirements and one recommendation.

The manager and senior staff continue to lack autonomy in making placement decisions. They are expected to view the wider organisational needs when they consider new placements. This makes the job of suitable matching and compatible group dynamics extremely difficult.

The matching and the quick admissions of new placements have been detrimental to the children's well-being. These repeated issues have led to unplanned endings, significant bullying incidents and distress for some children. The manager has raised concerns about the quick and successive placements of children and the negative affect on their well-being. This is highlighted in the manager's periodic review of care.

Four children were admitted to the home within a period of three weeks. Although these children had been placed together previously, this resulted in a very difficult and volatile situation. One child was repeatedly targeted by the other children during 10 bullying incidents. The staff called the police for assistance on several occasions due to the seriousness of the bullying. The staff intervened on each occasion but were unable to prevent the incidents. Finally, a decision was made to move one child. Consequently, the child experienced another placement breakdown. Despite this child being frightened, she did not want to move.

The children have little routine or structure to their days. Two children have not attended any education provision for several months. One child engages with a tutor at the home part time and attends an alternative education provision one day a week. Most of the children are at the home for the majority of the week. The children have poor sleep patterns, staying in bed until late into the day and causing a noise at night. This is not conducive to healthy daily routines or attending school.

The staff regularly offer a range of activities; however, there is little uptake. The children occasionally attend the cinema and go roller skating. The children prefer to be with each other or with their peers to doing anything with the staff or any education-based activity.

Several of the independent visitor's reports have not been submitted within the

required time frame. Some of the visits are very short. There is a lack of depth to the reports, a lack of consultation and the views of professionals are rarely obtained. This does not present a full picture and prevents Ofsted from receiving recent and relevant information.

The staff understand how to whistle-blow and have reported their concerns. The children have also made complaints about the staff. These have been fully investigated, and the staff concerned have been monitored. Despite this, on both occasions, these allegations were not shared with the designated officer. This breaches the home's safeguarding policy and prevents the designated officer from providing an external safeguarding role.

Generally, the staff have regular supervisions. However, there are gaps and some staff have worked for several months without regular supervision for their roles.

There are improvements to the fabric and decor of the communal areas, particularly the kitchen. The children's bedrooms and first-floor corridors are in need of refurbishment. These areas remain institutional in their appearance. The bedroom furniture is standardised, the walls need painting and the carpets are thin and stained. The worn decor fails to provide the children with comfortable and personalised bedrooms that they can take pride in.

The manager has introduced a new way of working in terms of rewards and consequences. These are increasingly more meaningful. The children have made a contribution to the records and signed or amended comments, showing that they are part of this process.

The new manager shows a full understanding of the shortfalls raised. The immediate concerns regarding a child being bullied have been addressed and are no longer a risk. There is a desire to improve the outcomes for children and provide the children with a home in which they can progress.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/08/2018	Full	Inadequate
13/12/2017	Full	Good
01/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that any care that is arranged or provided for a child that— relates to the child's development satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3). The conditions are— that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority; that the care meets the child's needs. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(d)(i)(3)(a)(b))	28/02/2020
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— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon	28/02/2020

as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(viii)) In particular, provide a stimulating and structured routine.	
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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(v)(vii)) In particular, ensure that all staff adhere to the home's safeguarding policy.	28/02/2020
The care planning standard is that children— have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14(1)(b))	28/02/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	28/02/2020
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and	28/02/2020

the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.
(Regulation 44(1)(2)(a)(4)(a)(b)(5))

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC034797

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Norfolk County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH

Responsible individual: Lee Napper

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2020