

SC037256

Suffolk County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to seven children aged between 11 and 18. The children may have experienced neglect and emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable.

The registered manager left the post on 1 February 2020. There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that Covid-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. During this remote visit, the inspector took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of Coronavirus by the manager. This has included the effect that these have had on staffing arrangements.

Inspection date: 1 April 2020

This monitoring visit

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 19 and 20 February 2020. The purpose of monitoring the home is to assess the progress made against the steps set out in the compliance notice that was served on 24 February 2020. This monitoring visit found that the compliance notice is met.

This monitoring inspection was undertaken remotely due to the challenges that Covid-19 is currently posing to Ofsted inspecting services.

The requirements that were raised at the last full inspection have not been fully reviewed at this monitoring inspection and will be evaluated at the next inspection. However, progress against these requirements has been made.

There have been no further admissions to the home. Two children have moved on in a planned way. One child has returned to their family, and another child has moved to semi-independent provision due to her age and ability to manage increased levels

of independence. This has reduced the number of children to five and significantly improved the group dynamics.

Bullying incidents have reduced in number and severity. The staff recognise and record potential bullying and coercion early on. Clear records and early recognition provide a protective factor. The staff are reflecting on incidents and recognising triggers and unhealthy relationship dynamics. They have adopted a more vigilant approach that looks beyond each incident and reviews the intention of the child. The staff discuss each incident with the children, encouraging them to understand the effect that their behaviours can have on others. These strategies have reduced tensions and protected the more vulnerable children.

The staff have successfully reduced children's substance misuse, particularly inside the home. The children have no access to money due to the potential risk of buying substances. On one occasion, two children returned to the home under the influence of cannabis. However, there is a significant reduction in suspected cannabis use. The staff have sought substance misuse agency support, but, due to the current social distancing measures, these agencies cannot presently visit the home.

The first-floor flat is no longer in use. The manager will consider the future use of the flat at a later date. The flat will not be used for the foreseeable future. The bedroom has been allocated as the staff sleep-in room. Therefore, this no longer poses any risk to the children living at the home.

The manager has detailed plans for a weekly meeting to provide the staff with an allocated day on which to discuss any feedback from reviews and changes to care plans. The meetings cannot be implemented during the social distancing measures and the linked staff shortages. In the interim period, the staff are sharing information using email and discussions. Recent changes have been agreed with the children, their allocated professionals and parents and shared among the staff team members.

There has been a decrease in the number of incidents. Risk assessments are amended and updated following any incidents. The manager has sourced external input and oversight using a psychologist to guide the staff's responses to incidents. This helps the staff to have a better understanding and take a more informed approach to negative behaviours. Generally, children's relationships have improved, and the behavioural incidents are decreasing; therefore, the home is safer and calmer.

The manager and staff team have improved the group dynamics. This is despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 in getting the children to practise social distancing. The changes to the group of children and the consistent staff responses have reduced the number of serious incidents and the associated risks to children.

The systems to monitor the incidents at the home are not fully effective. The monitoring systems are undeveloped, and, at times, the manager is not aware of some incidents. Therefore, the manager does not have a true picture of the current risks that children are taking and whether the strategies to reduce these are working. Despite this, there are noted improvements in the quality of care provided, and the children are safer.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2020	Full	Inadequate
28/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/09/2018	Full	Good
08/03/2018	Interim	Sustained 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; and 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(ii)(iv))	17/04/2020
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—	17/04/2020

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(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i))	
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 as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(viii))	17/04/2020
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	17/04/2020
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	30/06/2020

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037256

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Registered provider address: Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Deirdra Keating, social care inspector

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