

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. The children may have experienced neglect and emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable.

The registered manager has been in post since July 2020.

Inspection date: 2 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The visit took place in response to concerns raised with Ofsted. The scope of the visit was to establish whether there is effective managerial oversight of, and care being provided to, a child who is living in a single placement at a separate location. The placement is being operated under the managerial responsibility and oversight of this home. The visit was undertaken remotely.

The responsible individual and registered manager are responsible for the monitoring and oversight of the separate provision in which a child is being cared for. Their joint responsibility for the child commenced on 21 January 2021. However, the responsible individual and the manager did not request information relating to the external staff who are employed to care for the child until 28 January 2021. The information was not provided until the day of the monitoring visit. Therefore, the manager has been unable to oversee or monitor this provision.

The recruitment of external agency staff is poor. One member of staff applied for a recruitment and finance administrator role and the references supplied were in respect of that role. However, they are working as a support worker. A reference raising performance issues was not explored. A second member of staff has not had a certificate of good conduct check after working overseas. A reference containing dates of employment does not match the application form and there is no evidence

to show that this discrepancy has been explored. These shortfalls mean that the manager cannot ensure that the agency staff are all suitable to work with the child.

The manager has no oversight of the separate provision and is unaware of the concerns related to it. The external agency's training matrix does not show that the staff have the training to meet the child's needs. None of the staff have training in drug or alcohol awareness, despite significant risks to the child in regard to substance misuse and alcohol. Additionally, the staff are not trained in understanding and managing suicidal ideation or ligature use, despite these also being presenting risks for the child.

There are 10 external agency staff allocated to the separate provision. Half of the staff have less than six months of experience of working with children. Consequently, this team lacks the knowledge and skills to care for a child who presents with high-risk behaviours.

One external agency staff member worked excessive hours at another children's home in the days leading up to a shift at the single-placement provision. There is no system to monitor the staff's hours. Staff working excessive hours without a break or sleep could place the child at risk.

The external agency uses a recording system that is not compatible with the children's home's system. The external agency staff use applications on their personal mobile telephones to send information to each other and record details in regard to the child's care. This information is sent on to the external agency's management team. Therefore, the registered manager is unaware of specific information and details about the child's welfare and cannot monitor these.

The supervision and on-call arrangements for the external agency staff are provided by the external agency. The external agency staff raise concerns with the external agency and not the manager of the home. This means that the registered manager may not be made aware of serious concerns.

The child's risk assessment and support plans provide conflicting information. The plans include goals that are not possible to achieve due to the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions. The child's risk assessment states that there are waking-night staff and specific room checks at timed intervals. These safeguarding measures are not taking place. The child's health and education outcomes are unclear and there is no monitoring of the child's progress or safety. This fails to ensure that the staff hold current and relevant information about the child or ensure the child's safety.

The home's statement of purpose does not reflect the use of the single placement in a separate location. The location risk assessment for the home does not incorporate the additional provision. Therefore, it is not clear whether the separate provision placement supports the statement of purpose.

The external agency staff have some knowledge about the child and ensure that she speaks to significant people in her life. The staff have a sound awareness of their professional boundaries and understand the COVID-19 risks and prevention measures.

The two requirements and two recommendations that were raised at the last monitoring visit were not reviewed at this visit and have therefore been restated.

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 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— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)(a)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to the managerial monitoring and oversight of the separate provision that is linked to the children's home.	26 February 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only—	19 February 2021

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(b) (3)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all staff, including agency staff, have comprehensive recruitment checks.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	26 February 2021
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 the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	26 February 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the carpets are replaced to provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the children are provided with nutritious meals that meet the children’s dietary requirements. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.8)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor specific concerns received by Ofsted.

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: Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Louisa Nimmo

Inspector

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector

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