

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC037256
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual	Clifford James
Registered manager	Tobias Hall
Inspector	Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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 at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The management team needs to make further improvements to ensure that the children receive a good service. The staff continue to work with children who have complex and challenging needs. The children who have moved on have done so because of deterioration in their behaviour rather than through the fruition of their care plans. The management team completes impact assessments to inform decisions about whether they should accommodate a child in the home. However, a recent impact assessment does not consider the potential risk of bullying, despite this being a clear risk. This does not safeguard children or contribute to effective planning. The progress that the children have made in the three months since the last inspection is limited. Although some children have greater engagement with education services, there has been a deterioration in behaviour for other children. The management team identified the need to make improvements in relation to the children's education. One child is maintaining full-time attendance at school and another has increased the frequency and duration of their attendance. The staff do not consistently sign the entries that they make on children's case files. This could hamper any future analysis of records, making it difficult to identify which member of staff has made the recording. There has been a significant increase in incidents of bullying. The management team held a multi-agency strategy meeting to attempt to address this after earlier interventions produced little impact. It is too soon to fully assess the effectiveness of the actions following the meeting, although there has been an immediate decrease in observable bullying. There continue to be a significant number of incidents of children going missing. The staff and management team work closely with the local police to respond to these incidents. The police are very positive about the home, with one officer stating, 'We have a good relationship. Over the past couple of months I have definitely seen improvements.' A local police community support officer said, 'They are cooperative and provide the information we need. I have no criticism of the way in which the staff care for the children. The children's needs are very well catered for.' The staff are still struggling to access copies of return from going missing interviews. However, the manager is actively pursuing this information and	

exploring ways to resolve the issue.

The management team has met the majority of requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. The staff received training in managing self-harm and missing children. The manager has updated the children's guide to reflect current practice. Risk assessments have been updated. However, they are not always sufficiently thorough. For example, the risk assessment for a new resident does not include key information pertaining to safer working practices. This does not fully safeguard children or staff.

The management team has some awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. However, there are times when the management team has shown a lack of curiosity. For example, in one case record there is reference to a child turning on a 'sex channel' in another child's room, suggesting the potential for children to be able to access inappropriate channels on the televisions in their rooms. Despite this, there had been no further exploration of the incident to understand the issue or to prevent future occurrences.

The management team has undertaken a review of the night-time staffing arrangements as recommended at the last inspection. However, night-time continues to be a time when the children's behaviour is most difficult. The majority of incidents of children going missing occur after 10pm and almost all bullying incidents happen during the night shift. The staff recognise that this is a time of vulnerability but are unsure why. As a result, the service continues to struggle to manage challenging situations or children's challenging behaviour effectively at night-time.

Multi-agency working is strong. The management team has proactively promoted this. Monthly meetings take place with the police and other key professionals including neighbouring children's homes. This enables the staff to have a wider contextual understanding of incidents and provides the potential for a better response to risks in the community.

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for seven children from the age of 11 to 18 years old. The home looks after children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement
09/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
26/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard, with particular reference to managing children's challenging behaviour at night-time, the responsible person must ensure: (2)(a) that staff— (i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; and (xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.	28/11/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered provider must ensure: (2)(a)(i) 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. This is in relation to completing comprehensive impact assessments and individual risk assessments.	28/11/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular regard to ensuring that the service understands what children can access from the televisions in their rooms, the registered provider must ensure: (2)(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.	28/11/2016

The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c))	28/11/2016
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Recommendations

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

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority enables the home to take account of information provided by return interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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

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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