

SC037256

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to seven children aged between 11 and 18 years. The home looks after children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 8 March 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 13 June 2017

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 sustained effectiveness.

The management and staff have worked to address concerns raised during the last inspection. This work has resulted in the following improvements:

- Before a child is admitted to the home, a thorough risk assessment is undertaken to assess whether the home can provide a suitable placement for them.
- The home has a multi-agency approach to reducing the risks to children.
- Serious incidents are appropriately reported in a timely manner to Ofsted.

- The manager monitors and evaluates missing-from-home incidents in detail. There has been a noted reduction in these incidents recently.
- Rigorous safeguarding checks are carried out on new staff employed at the home.

Restraints and physical interventions are recorded on two separate logs. There is brief guidance in the logs to explain the circumstances in which each log should be used to record an incident when a physical intervention or restraint is used with a child. The restraint log enables staff to record the incident in full, including the views of the staff and children involved. The physical intervention log does not follow the same recording format. The staff are not sufficiently clear about what constitutes a restraint as opposed to a non-restrictive physical intervention, as defined by the home. This has the potential to leave staff and children vulnerable, as there is not a consistent record of their views following a physical intervention.

The local authority uses an online spreadsheet in each of its homes to record admissions and discharges. The record of information is not sufficiently accurate. For example, the address that a child moved to after leaving the home is recorded as 'supported living'. Failure to ensure that the information is correct and accurate means that a clear audit trail is not provided, should this be needed at a later date.

Ofsted has not received reports of the monthly external monitoring visits to the home in a timely way until recently. The reports vary in quality and do not always include actions and recommendations to improve the quality of care that the home provides. In addition, the reports do not always contain the views of professionals or the children's parents and families. Consequently, opportunities to drive improvement as a result of this monitoring may be missed.

The manager's most recent internal monitoring report provides a clear and comprehensive review of the quality of care provided. Strengths of the home are identified and a plan for developing areas of the service are explored.

The staff work to make the large building homely. This is undertaken to good effect and, despite the size of the building, there is a welcoming feel. Some improvements are needed, such as cleaning or replacing damaged carpets which are stained with nail varnish. This damage detracts from what is otherwise a well-maintained and presented home.

The home encourages the participation of the children. The children's views are gained through regular house meetings and key-working sessions with staff, and the feedback influences decisions that are made about the home. One child said, 'We were asked at a house meeting what we would like to change in the house. We gave our opinions and [the manager] is trying to get funding for things like a new pool table.' However, children's views on the records of consequences of negative behaviour are not routinely recorded. This can lead to children feeling that their opinions are not valued and makes monitoring the effectiveness of such controls difficult.

The children leave the home in a planned and structured way. When appropriate, the

staff continue to offer support once a child leaves in order to provide stability in their new placement. However, the decisions made about children leaving the home are not consistently recorded on the children's records. This leaves no clear audit trail should these decisions need to be referred to in the future.

The home works well with external professionals. One social worker said, 'Communication with the home is really good. They [the staff] are very accommodating, and [the child] has settled in well.' Relationships between the staff and children are positive. One child said, 'I get on with all of the staff really well. I like to help them out with cooking when I can.' The staff speak positively about working at the home. One member of staff said, 'Everyone is friendly and kind to one another and very supportive, and this is really good for the children.'

The staff encourage the children with their education. Four of the children have full-time school or college placements. Two children have in-house tuition. The staff use positive incentives to encourage attendance to help the children to make positive progress.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement
09/03/2016	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 registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to	09/04/2018

confirm it is accurate, and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff understand the recording formats. Provide clear guidance to staff about recording physical interventions and the terminology used to describe physical intervention and restraint.	
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. In particular, a record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child the date of the child's admission to the children's home, the date on which the child ceased to be accommodated in the home, the child's address immediately before being accommodated in the home, the child's address on leaving the home, the child's placing authority and the statutory provision (if any) under which the child is accommodated. (Regulation 37(2)(a) Schedule 4 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))	09/04/2018
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'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. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(2)(a)(5)(7)(a)) In particular, ensure that the submission of reports to HMCI is timely.	09/04/2018

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)
In particular, ensure that the home is well maintained, including the carpets.
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
In particular, ensure that children's views and comments are recorded in the

positive consequences record.

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
In particular, that records of important meetings and discussions about children are accurate.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom 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.

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: SC037256

Provision sub-type: children's home

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

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Tobias Hall

Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy, social care inspector

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