

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	09/03/2016
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	09/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained effectiveness. The home has made some progress in addressing issues identified at the last inspection. However, there remains further work to do as the home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. The home has improved its working relationship with the local advocacy service. The advocacy service visits the home and is undertaking return interviews for young people. There has been improvement generally in the homes response to young people who go missing. Along with the increase in return interviews, the quality of records relating to missing has also improved. The staff team have received training in child sexual exploitation. They have also received training in online safety. A course on self-harm has been sourced and staff are beginning to complete this. A plan is in place for the introduction of the 'passport for independence' programme. The staff are being trained in order to be able to effectively implement this. The home has introduced a new model of risk assessment. Whilst this is more detailed, it remains a work in progress. Managers have updated the location risk assessment. It is positive to see that staff have shared this with young people. However, the staff have not fully explored the young people's understanding of the risks. As a result the staff do not know where the gaps in young people's knowledge lie and subsequently are not able to respond to plug those gaps. Impact assessments have improved. These are more thorough and consider the potential impact of proposed placements on current residents. In one case the responsible individual overruled the recommendation of an impact assessment completed by the deputy manager. In this instance there was no reasoning for this decision contained on the young person file or as an addendum to the impact assessment. When a manager in a home arrives at the conclusion that a placement is not suitable following a carefully considered analysis of the available information, the rationale for overriding the decision should be clear within the record.	

The manager has introduced daily and weekly checks to monitor the quality of records. Monthly reports are also completed. As a result the quality of recording has improved. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Fire drills take place. However, the records are not sufficiently clear. They do not include the duration of the drill and offer no evaluation of the effectiveness of the practice. Consequently the records do not contribute to identifying any necessary improvements. As a result the services understanding of the efficiency of emergency evacuations is limited.

Visits by an independent person take place each month. However, recently reports have not been submitted to the regulator in a timely manner, nor do they routinely seek the views of family members. This has an impact on the regulators ability to monitor the service. In addition reports do not routinely include the views of family members. This means that their views are absent from the subsequent evaluation of the service. There are regular young people's meetings. However, the outcomes of these meetings are not routinely discussed at staff meetings despite this being the action the home agreed after the last inspection. Therefore the young people are seeing limited evidence of the results of their views being listened to and acted upon.

The staff and managers' report that staffing levels are sufficient. The manager confirms that he has the power to bring in additional staff if needed in response to the behaviour of young people. He feels that he is encouraged to do this if he feels it necessary. Additional staff were used over the Christmas holidays in response to the behaviour of young people. There was close supervision of the young people during the inspection.

The frequency of staff supervision has improved, however, there are still occasions when staff do not have one to one supervisions for a period exceeding two months. This level of gap does not provide staff with opportunities to reflect on practice, discuss the young people or their own professional development with sufficient regularity.

The progress and experiences of young people since the last inspection is variable. There has been an increase in incidents of young people going missing from care. This led to the service arranging for a multi-agency safeguarding meeting to explore the reasons for this and whether there was anything more that the home could do. This was positive proactive practice designed to learn and improve. The multi-agency conclusion was that the home was doing all it could and should be doing.

The young people who have moved on from the service have done so due to issues with their behaviour causing their placement to end early. Despite these moves suggesting that placement matching and impact assessments needed to improve, there has been no formal learning or reflection about practice relating to these moves. As a result the opportunity for the home to learn and develop from these experiences is not utilised.

The young person spoken to felt safe in the home. He said: 'They are good. The staff care for us really well. The support is good. I could not ask for a better care home.' The parent had no concerns regarding his young person's safety. The social worker had no concerns. Where managers have concerns themselves, for example, in relation to the recent increase in missing incidents, they seek the advice of safeguarding professionals. There have been very few incidents of physical intervention in the home since the last inspection. The staff manage behaviour through other means. For example, the manager and staff dealt calmly with a young person in distress and causing damage during the course of the inspection. A child sexual exploitation professional said: 'I have seen them engage with very difficult young people very well.'

The staff are now involved in multi-agency children at risk of exploitation meetings. This enables them to share and receive information from multi agency partners about local issues. External professionals are generally positive about the service. Representatives from local child sexual exploitation services, advocacy services and social work services speak positively about the engagement with the home. The parent spoken to was also positive about communication.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
26/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/12/2014	Full	Good
13/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard with particular reference to ensuring that the planned independence programme is introduced the registered provider must ensure that staff: (2) (b) (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.	30/04/2016
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard with particular regard to ensuring the planned training in missing and self-harm is completed the registered provider must ensure that the staff team: (3) (c) (i) has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care.	30/04/2016
The registered person must ensure that when the independent person is carrying out a visit, the independent person interviews in private parents and relatives of young people resident in the home. (Regulation 44 (2) (a))	30/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22 paragraph 4.11)
- Ensure that where a placement breaks down, the home management review the reasons why and any lessons to be learnt. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55 paragraph 10.24)
- Ensure that where the professional judgement of the homes management team is overruled in relation to placement decision, a clear rational for that overruling is recorded on the young person's file. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56 paragraph 11.4)
- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them with particular regard to ensuring that records of fire drills capture the duration of the drill and an evaluation of the evacuation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)
- Ensure that all staff, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. This is with particular regard to ensuring sufficient frequency of one to one supervisions. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.2)
- Ensure that staff have an understanding of the young people's comprehension of the risks identified within the location risk assessment. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64 paragraph 15.1)

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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