

SC037256

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Full inspection

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.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this home on 2 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 19 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since April 2020, five children have moved into the home and six have left the home. There are currently four children living at the home.

The manager has assessed and accepted children into the home despite this leading to an increase in risks in the context of the children who were already living there. New admissions have resulted in group dynamics that are very difficult to manage. This has had a negative impact on children's relationships with each other.

Two children are attending school well and making progress. However, one child has under 50% school attendance and the most recently admitted child has no provision arranged, although there are plans under way. The staff are unable to get some of the children to attend school. The staff struggle to manage the impact of low or non-attendance on those children who may otherwise attend.

The stability of the home is inconsistent. Settled periods are followed by times when there is an increase in behavioural incidents. Incidents that occur overnight undermine the children's school attendance and create anxiety for some children.

One child has been moved from the home following safeguarding concerns. Two other children, who have left recently, experienced a planned transition from the home, opting to live locally and stay in contact with the staff.

The staff aim for a daily routine, with communal meals that offer well-presented healthy food options. The staff sit with the children and encourage social mealtimes and conversation. The staff have established positive relationships with children. The children's social workers have consistently identified that the staff's relationships with the children are good.

The staff encourage the children to share their views. The children's ideas are represented around the home. Children helped to plan the new kitchen and made a choice about changing the use of the dining room and lounge. Group and individual activities reflect their interests and mealtimes are planned in accordance with their choices.

The children are invested in living at the home and all said that they want to be there. Several of the children have local connections and can spend time with their family or friends easily. The children appreciate this local connection. Other children like the seafront proximity and sea views.

The manager is working with the staff to create a homely, welcoming environment. The house provides ample room with spacious communal areas. The staff have

worked hard on its maintenance and decoration. Improvement is reflected throughout the house and the garden and particularly in the children's bedrooms.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Risk assessments are individualised and updated regularly. However, they do not contain sufficient guidance for staff to help mitigate all risks to the children. The assessment of children as part of the referral process fails to realistically measure their risks against the existing group of children.

There are children who have been bullied and assaulted and felt unsafe. Some of the relationships between the children are unhealthy and harmful. The staff have taken action to minimise this by supervising the children closely. The relationships between children have improved recently, following a child moving out of the home.

Allegations about the staff and safeguarding concerns are shared with professionals and managed appropriately. The staff are encouraged to reflect on incidents. Actions following investigations are followed through. This helps to upskill the staff and improve their practice.

The staff's response to behavioural incidents has improved. There is a focus on maintaining the house rules and implementing consistent boundaries. Children understand the rules and accept that if they fail to return at agreed times, they may be unable to go out the next day. These consequences are meaningful and help the children to learn from their actions.

Health and safety checks are carried out by the staff and a contractor for the local authority. The manager was unaware that the electrical condition report provided in November 2020 was unsatisfactory and included a number of recommendations. This was addressed at the inspection and this work has been booked in. However, the lack of managerial oversight fails to ensure that the environment is safely maintained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There is a clear organisational structure for the management of the home. The registered manager has been in post for a year, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The manager has had an increased workload due to the additional responsibility of providing oversight of a flat attached to the home and the number of new admissions. These factors, combined with COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, have led to several challenges.

The manager's monitoring and review of care lacks clear evaluation. The manager has reviewed the quality of care and identified shortfalls without saying how the care will improve. The external visitor's reports are clear and identify the safeguarding concerns.

The manager has not identified one external complaint as a complaint or provided a record of the home's response. When the children make complaints, the manager responds quickly. However, in one instance, there is no record to demonstrate that the complaint was investigated properly. This is not in line with the home's procedure for managing complaints.

The manager and staff work collaboratively with social workers and other professionals. They meet to address safeguarding concerns and provide support for the children as and when required.

Despite the challenges of the last year, the manager has maintained an enthusiastic drive to address the previous shortfalls. The staff are positive about their roles and benefit from a supportive manager. This support is reflected in the positive feedback provided by the staff.

The four requirements and two recommendations that were raised at the last monitoring visit have been met.

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This particularly refers to improving the detail and quality of the risk assessments.	30 April 2021
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person must supply to HMCI, at HMCI's request, a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken in response to each complaint. (Regulation 39 (1) (3) (5))	30 April 2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children;	30 April 2021

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislations, particularly in relation to the electrical condition report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff consistently pursue education attendance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Suffolk County Council

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

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Louisa Nimmo

Inspectors

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

Paula Edwards, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021