

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 aged between 11 and 18. The children may have experienced neglect or emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable. The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted on 24 August 2015.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; and has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(b)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that children are made aware of all of the ways that they can make a complaint, and that they can access complaint forms.	26/10/2018
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that fire doors close securely.	28/09/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person and the home's staff should be familiar with the care planning process for looked-after children and must assist children to prepare for meetings in relation to this. Staff should play an important role in these meetings, including supporting the child and enabling a clear understanding to be reached about the child's views, wishes, feelings, and expectations for their future. An independent advocate can also be called upon by the child or staff to support the child in their reviews. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.14)
This is with particular regard to ensuring that staff are prepared for children's care review meetings.
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control and discipline are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people's experiences are positive. The staff and young people have strong relationships forged through open and honest communication. The young people make progress and benefit from staff who care about their well-being and ensure that their needs are met.

The staff specialise in providing a long-term home while preparing young people for independence. Young people who have left the home since the last inspection did so in a planned way. The home's management ensures that young people who move into the home will fit in with the young people who already live there.

All of the young people have education or training placements. The staff understand the importance of learning and prioritise suitable arrangements for the young people. The staff use rewards to encourage attendance, and work collaboratively with education and training providers to address any issues if they arise.

Young people enjoy a wide range of recreational and leisure options that reflect their interests. They all have membership of a local gym and swimming pool. Cinema trips, bowling and eating out are popular choices. Some of the young people attend a local youth club, and one young person is a member of St. John's Ambulance. This enables young people to develop social skills and widen their peer groups.

The young people regularly see their families and friends. Staff at the home take the young people to see their families and encourage these relationships when it is right for

the young person.

The staff involve the young people in planning their care through regular house meetings and talking to each young person. Young people's views and opinions are captured through these group or individual discussions, and staff respond to questions or requests raised by the young people. However, the young people are unclear about all available avenues to make a complaint. During the inspection, one young person raised an issue, but the staff were unable to provide a complaint form promptly. This limits the young people's options and ability to make a complaint should they want to.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff are experienced and well trained and demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding practice. When young people leave the home without permission or go missing from home, the staff follow clear, individualised protocols. Difficult and challenging behaviour is de-escalated by the staff to good effect. Therefore, physical interventions are used rarely and as a last resort. The staff use positive reinforcement with success.

The effective multi-agency working is valued and understood by the staff team to meet the needs of the young people. Strong, positive and lasting relationships are created with professionals and families. A clinical psychologist from the local children's mental health service said, 'Communication with the home is excellent. [The staff] manage risk extremely well, and if risks increase they respond appropriately and proportionately. They are quick to let me know. They take on advice that I give and apply it well for the benefit of the young people.'

The staff team is stable and well established. There is currently one full-time vacancy due to staff being seconded into other roles as part of their development.

The home is a large old building that has an institutional feel to it, which is an issue that has been raised in previous inspections. The management and staff have made efforts to reduce this and to give a homely feel, and this has been achieved to good effect in some areas. The lounge has been redecorated, and parts of the home that were damaged by the young people have been repaired. Despite some improvements, essential fire safety measures were found to be lacking, with three fire doors not closing securely. The manager made immediate plans to have them repaired, as this poses a risk to children and staff.

The manager ensures that safeguarding records are clear and up to date. Staff use positive incentives to encourage good behaviour but they do not record these incentives. Negative consequences are recorded. However, these measures are not scrutinised and analysed to assess whether they are fair.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has relevant qualifications, experience and skills to manage the home. Staff receive reflective, practice-led supervisions and appraisals. The staff said that they benefit from opportunities to reflect on their practice. Any staff who have not achieved the necessary level 3 qualification are enrolled on the course.

Internal monitoring of the quality of care is comprehensive. Improvements have been made to external monitoring visits. A good level of challenge is provided and actions raised for the manager to address to improve the quality of care.

Staff feel supported by the home's management. The young people are discussed at regular team meetings. Feedback from a broad range of professionals was positive. One young person's social worker said, '[The staff] work very closely with me and are very understanding about things. They come up with constructive ideas and have worked closely with [the young person]'s parents. [The young person]'s parents experience some difficulties, and the staff arrange for [the young person] to see her family in a safe way.'

The young people's case files are concise, detailed and updated regularly. Risk assessments, behaviour management plans and key-working sessions are thorough and evidence participation by the young people. The staff attend meetings with the young people. One young person's independent reviewing officer said, '[The young person] is settled at the home and staff support him with his hobbies and his education. My only gripe is that [the staff] could come to review meetings better prepared. I do not receive a pre-review report and sometimes the staff do not have all of the information that they should.' Being unprepared for such meetings means that information may not always be shared in a timely and appropriate way.

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.

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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