

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 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.

Inspection date: 13 October 2021

Date of last inspection: 12 April 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

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 this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has declined in effectiveness.

The management team has not met the three requirements made at the last inspection. Two additional requirements and one recommendation have been made at this visit.

The staff have been unable to address escalating incidents of peer-on-peer abuse between two of the children. There have been several significant incidents when a child has caused harm to another child. This has resulted in a child feeling unsafe and staff acknowledging that they cannot manage the situation safely. Staff respond immediately to each incident, however, reparation work is limited and ineffective. There is a failure to address the direct impact that children's actions have had on other children. As a result, opportunities to resolve differences and improve relationships have not been possible. This has led to unstable group dynamics and harmful interactions between two children.

Risk management plans are updated regularly. However, these assessments require improvement. There is a lack of guidance for staff to reduce risks to the children. Risk reduction controls are not reviewed after incidents and there are limited preventative strategies in place. Some gaps have been identified in one child's risk assessment. Overall, these plans are not consistently good enough to direct the staff and prevent risky situations.

The manager has responded to one external complaint adequately. However, when the children raise concerns, recorded responses are missing. Records are unclear with regard to how the staff have addressed children's worries and there is no evidence of any outcomes in regard to their concerns. This is not in line with the home's procedure for managing complaints.

The manager's internal review of the quality of care fails to consider consultations with children, families and staff. Some elements lack clear evaluation, and objectives identified for continuous improvement are not measurable. This reduces the capacity of the management team to understand the strengths and development opportunities for the home.

The monitoring of behaviour management records is not good enough. When staff use physical interventions, the duration of specific holds is not always recorded. Following interventions, the staff do not always have access to debriefs and children's views are not consistently recorded. Managerial oversight is sometimes delayed beyond required time frames. Sanctions are used frequently, however, there are currently no records that evidence this. Furthermore, the manager has identified

that children often do not engage with agreed sanctions in response to their behaviour, which reduces their effectiveness. Poor recording and managerial oversight compromise opportunities to reduce the occurrence of further incidents and plan for behavioural strategies.

Extensive maintenance and renovation work is underway at the home. This includes the redecoration of the games room and the replacement of several fire doors. Despite the ongoing works, there is no risk assessment to ensure that these works take place safely. The house provides ample room with spacious communal areas. Children's bedrooms are personalised in line with their interests. However, some damage to the living room wall and in one child's bedroom have not been repaired in a timely manner. The front and side entrance doors need repainting and the dining room ceiling requires cleaning. These issues detract from what is otherwise a nurturing and well-maintained home.

Children have regular routines that enable them to attend their education hours. The children make educational progress from their starting points in this area.

The management team has taken immediate steps to address the shortfalls identified. Alternative respite arrangements for two children have been made to minimise the impact of their deteriorating relationship.

The manager has met the two recommendations from the previous inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2020	Full	Inadequate
28/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/09/2018	Full	Good

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. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2021
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— manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv))	30 November 2021
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each	30 October 2021

child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring a suitable risk assessment is carried out when maintenance works are undertaken at the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, 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 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.	30 November 2021

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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. (Regulation 39 (1) (3)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 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; 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)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	30 November 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should provide a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that damage is repaired in a timely way and ensure that all areas of the home are decorated to a consistently good standard. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

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.

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

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Louisa Nimmo

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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