

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 with complex needs who require specialist support. Six children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2023	Full	Good
11/04/2022	Full	Good
13/10/2021	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Five children spoke to the inspectors during the inspection. The children like living at the home and spoke warmly about their relationships with staff. Interactions between children and staff are mutually respectful. These positive relationships have helped children make progress from their starting points.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out and one has moved in. Children have carefully planned moves that centre around their needs. The child that moved in was supported to visit and visited by the staff before they moved. This supported the child to form relationships with staff and familiarise themselves with the home. For the child who moved out, staff have continued their support to the child and their family. This helps to create stability for the children after they have moved out.

Children are supported to access education arrangements relevant to their needs. Some are making progress with learning and attend regularly. Other children have struggled to engage with education. When children have struggled, staff encourage and emphasise the importance of education. This approach has supported children to attend more regularly.

Staff support children to see people who are important to them. Children have family visits and friendship ties. Staff encourage children to travel independently to see family and friends. As a result, children are spending more time with people who are important to them and building their independence skills.

Children access activities outside the home. Visits to theme parks, football stadiums, bike rides and the gym are enjoyed by children. Children often take part in group activities. This helps them to build positive relationships with one another.

Staff support children to express their views. Regular children's meetings and ad-hoc conversations take place with children. When the children share their views, these are responded to, and the children are given an outcome. This approach encourages children to share their views about their care.

Professionals involved with the home provided positive feedback about the manager and staff. They have no concerns about the quality of care provided to children. All stated that the children have made progress from their starting point.

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

Behavioural challenges are responded to well by staff. Children are provided with targeted key-worker sessions and time away from peers to reflect on behaviour. These approaches help children to reflect on behaviour that is not positive and develop appropriate peer relationships.

Staff are alert to indicators of substance misuse and challenge these. Staff question children when they return home under the influence and support them with aftercare. Staff set expectations of behaviour and use proportionate consequences to help children understand the dangers of substance misuse. Staff and managers have established good links with other professionals and agencies. There is good support from substance misuse workers, who regularly visit the home. These approaches help to educate children to understand the dangers.

There have been several incidents of children going missing from home. Staff have responded appropriately. Staff attempt to locate the children and work with families and other professionals. Staff warmly welcome children home and speak to children about their absence. When there have been concerns about risk, staff have responded well to these. Effective communication with other professionals takes place. This considers how to reduce the risk posed to children. Staff work directly with children to help them have a better understanding of the risks they face.

Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. On occasion, this has been used as a last resort to keep children safe. Children are spoken to about incidents. However, on two occasions there were significant delays in conversations taking place with children. On one occasion, a child said that they were harmed after a physical intervention. Leaders and managers failed to investigate the child's comments. This does not ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place for children when they raise concerns.

Children's risk management plans are generally updated after incidents. However, these plans fail to capture the full range of the children's vulnerabilities. Two children struggle with substance misuse and children have been known to smoke in their bedrooms. Plans do not capture all details of these risks or outline how staff should respond. Inconsistencies in risk management plans could limit staff's alertness to the risks children face.

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

The manager was absent during the inspection. Two deputy managers led the inspection in the manager's absence.

Leaders and managers do not have a consistent approach to monitoring the home's performance or the children's records. A range of documents and records lack managerial oversight and review. Incident records do not always provide a clear narrative about what has happened. For example, when the children have returned home under the influence of substances or alcohol, records do not detail the welfare checks for the children. Physical interventions and behaviour management records are not reviewed by managers within timescales. The lack of effective management oversight limits the ability to identify weakness and make continuous improvements.

Some staff benefit from regular supervision sessions. However, some staff have not received supervision regularly. Leaders and managers did not identify these gaps.

Staff are either enrolled on a level 3 qualification course or have gained this qualification. However, two staff members have not achieved this within the required timescale. This prevents all staff from being supported and qualified for their roles.

Fire safety measures are not effective. Several fire doors are defective, and two were propped open and unable to close securely. Leaders and managers have known about defects to fire doors for some time. Despite this, repairs have not taken place. Leaders and managers made immediate plans during the inspection to have the doors repaired as they pose a risk to children and staff.

The manager is qualified and dedicated to the role. Two deputy managers support her. Leaders and managers have aspirations and plans for the home. They show insight and reflection on how staff practice and recording can improve.

Staff speak highly of the support given by leaders and managers and enjoy working at the home. Team meetings are child centred and support staff practice discussions. This gives staff the support to reflect and develop.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. New staff benefit from well-planned inductions and mandatory training. Additional training takes place that is specific to the needs of the children who live at the home. These approaches support staff in their roles.

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, The 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
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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) In particular: ensure that risk management plans are factual and include all risks for the children; and review staff's knowledge and training to ensure staff act in accordance with the home's safeguarding and whistle-blowing procedures.	25 July 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	25 July 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(h))	
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— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use 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; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(v)(b)(i)(ii))	25 July 2025
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) 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))	25 July 2025

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 address: Babergh District Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Glynn Smith

Registered manager: Louisa Nimmo

Inspectors

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector
Emilja Myers, Social Care Inspector

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