

SC037281

Suffolk County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to six children aged between 10 and 17. The children may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable.

The manager has been registered since April 2020.

Inspection date: 2 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The purpose of this visit was to establish the management oversight and care provided for a child in a single placement, at a separate location, following concerns raised with Ofsted. The placement is being operated under the responsibility and oversight of this home. This visit was undertaken remotely.

This home is registered for up to six children. One of these places is currently used for a child who is living at a single placement and being looked after by a mix of local authority and external agency staff.

The placing local authority and the registered manager took over responsibility for the single placement on 23 December 2020. Since that time, there has been a gradual move towards effective oversight and management of it, but this is not working well enough yet. All concerned acknowledge that this is not the right placement for the child, but his needs are such that, along with the impact of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, it has not proved possible to find a better place for him to live. While a placement is being sought, staff are working to keep the child safe. Many of the staff working with him are known to the child and aware of his needs.

The registered manager does not supervise either the agency staff or the local authority staff who work at the single placement. Those staff are all supervised by

their respective line managers. The registered manager is not able to use supervision to form a comprehensive picture of how all the staff are working at the home. For example, the agency staff are using their own organisation's processes for writing records. This involves the use of personal email addresses and mobile phones as well as a social media application. The registered manager has not been aware of this and so has not been able to make sure that the methods being used are sufficiently secure and confidential.

The agency staff use their own on-call system. Therefore, significant issues are being discussed with the agency staff members' managers, not the registered manager responsible for the home. Significant incident reports are also submitted through the agency, which leads to a delay in the registered manager receiving and being able to monitor them. The local authority staff are in the process of transferring the child's records onto the local authority's own forms. The placement plan is still being completed and, at present, the only version is out of date. The risk assessment was completed on the day of this visit. It states that all staff have had ligature training, but the registered manager is not sure if this is the case. The risk assessment also refers to staff using the on-call service, but two different on-call services are being used.

The registered manager does not have enough oversight of the rota to make sure that there are always staff on duty who have the levels of experience required to meet the high level of needs of this child. Neither is the manager aware of any additional hours that the agency staff are working in other settings.

The agency has sent employment records for their staff to the registered manager, but he has not monitored these closely enough to identify gaps in them. The most recent employer reference for one agency member of staff, who has been working for the agency since October 2020, was only received on 4 January 2021. Another reference for this member of staff was only requested on 28 January 2021. This means that his reasons for leaving a previous role with children have not been verified. In other cases, when references have been verified, there is no record of the details of the verification, so there is a lack of evidence of anyone verifying why staff have left previous jobs involving children. This means that the registered manager cannot be assured that all staff are suitable to work with children.

The requirements from the recent assurance visit were not looked at during this visit and have therefore been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/04/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Inadequate
21/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. 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 and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure that the repairs required in the children's bedrooms are completed.	26 February 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;	26 February 2021

understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children have individualised health plans that address their needs and are recorded in the children's care and placement plans.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(xi)(xii)(xiii)) In particular, ensure that all staff undertake training on promoting diversity and managing bullying and racism and understand how to challenge racist and bullying behaviours.	26 February 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— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that the risk assessments explore all the children’s risks and vulnerabilities with clear guidance on how to mitigate those risks. In addition, ensure that the staff receive relevant training to enable them to meet the children’s identified needs.	26 February 2021
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	26 February 2021

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered manager should have oversight of the single placement to enable sufficient monitoring of the quality of care provided.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, ensure that all staff, including agency staff, have comprehensive recruitment checks.	19 February 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or	30 April 2021

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.

The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—

does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or

works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis.

(Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording of information on individual children in a way that will be helpful to the child. Specifically, ensure that placement plans are up to date, and records are dated. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery at the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for

continuous improvement at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to establish the management oversight and care provided for a child in a single placement, at a separate location, following concerns raised with Ofsted.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037281

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: Joseph Cox

Inspector

Clive Lucas, Social Care Inspector

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