

SC037281

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 8 and 13. The children may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse, or had traumatic experiences which have left them vulnerable. The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in August 2008.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 October 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/09/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2016	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 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; and ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; and provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	12/11/2018
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;	02/11/2018

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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(b))* In particular: Urgent action is required to review and update children's behaviour management plans and risk assessments to ensure that strategies are safe, in line with regulation and do not routinely deprive children of their liberty. Ensure that the home's management and every member of staff working on shift at the home have read, understood and implemented each child's behaviour management plan and risk assessments. Ensure that the home's management and every member of staff understand their responsibility to protect children when they are known to be at risk, and that staff receive appropriate support and training to enable them to provide safe and effective care that meets each child's needs. Ensure that all risk assessments are reviewed and revised with the presenting risks, and that they detail the measures that staff should consider to reduce identified risks.	
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 child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d)) In particular, ensure that the grounds of the home are made safe and hazards are removed or repaired.	12/11/2018
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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b))	12/11/2018
The care planning standard is that children—	12/11/2018

receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	
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, make immediate arrangements to ensure that all of the fire doors close fully.	12/10/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b)(c))	12/11/2018
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)(5))	12/11/2018

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant shortfalls in behaviour management, managerial oversight of practice and external monitoring of practice have resulted in a judgement of inadequate for this home. Although children have positive experiences, these are seriously undermined by the shortfalls in the help and protection that children receive and the leadership and management of the home.

Behaviour management techniques are unsafe, breach regulations and do not respect children's rights and dignity. The staff have identified significant risks but have failed to respond appropriately. Despite this, there are some positive aspects of care for the children.

The children benefit from a wide range of activities both at the home and in the community. The staff take the children camping in the school holidays. The children can access a range of clubs, including a local football team. The children have good relationships with the neighbours.

All of the children access education. They attend well and make progress at school.

Children receive positive incentives for attending school and keeping their rooms tidy. Sanctions for negative behaviour are used proportionately.

The staff encourage contact between the children and their families, who are welcomed to the home. Staff take children to see their families when appropriate.

Feedback from families and professionals is generally positive.

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

Children are not safeguarded effectively. There has been a significant increase in the number of physical interventions at the home since the last inspection. This increase followed the admission of a child in February 2018. The home did not follow the process of assessing the child and the potential impact of that child on other children. Since February 2018, there have been over 100 incidents of physical interventions. Some of these interventions had the potential to put both staff and children at risk.

At the interim inspection in February 2018, it was found that a child's bedroom door handle was held briefly while he was in his bedroom to contain his aggressive behaviour. Despite Ofsted raising this as a shortfall, the practice has been allowed to continue and has become significantly worse. During this inspection, it was found that escorting or carrying a child to their room, up the stairs, when the child is in a heightened state, and holding the door to the child's bedroom closed has become a common response by staff to negative behaviours displayed by the children. The social workers spoken to during

the inspection were not aware that these methods were being used. The training provider for physical intervention and behaviour management confirmed that these techniques are not taught or condoned as they restrict children's liberty and are unsafe.

The behaviour management plans for the children concerned do not detail techniques involving carrying or physically moving children up the stairs. The plans are ambiguous, vague and open to misinterpretation. Lack of clarity in behaviour management plans means that staff do not have the guidance and strategies that they need to manage behaviour safely.

Managers have failed to respond appropriately to identified risks. One child is known to use ligatures, and another child displays other self-harming behaviours. Necessary training in responding to self-injurious behaviours and removal of ligatures has not been provided to the staff despite these behaviours being known about for several months. Failure to provide staff with the training that they need to safeguard children from potentially harmful situations puts children at risk.

The grounds of the home have outdoor play equipment that is in a state of disrepair. This, along with other items such as gardening equipment, presents hazards to the children if not removed or repaired.

Despite the home's large and imposing size, it has a homely feel. Communal areas are clean and comfortable, and the home is furnished and decorated to a good standard. However, during the inspection it was found that essential fire safety was lacking because two fire doors did not close tightly. The manager set about arranging immediate repair to the doors. Fire doors that fail to close properly present a risk to children and staff in the event of a fire.

There are clear strategies in place if children leave the home without permission or go missing. Staff understand what to do in response to an incident of a child going missing. There have been no reported episodes of children going missing since 2013.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The qualified and experienced manager has been registered to manage the home since August 2008.

The home has seen some difficult and challenging behaviours since the interim inspection in February 2018. Since this time, essential management tasks have been overlooked and neglected. The home's manager has failed to lead a culture in the home that promotes children's welfare. The manager has not been clear with social workers about the extent of restrictive intervention used at the home. Consequently, professionals working with the children have not been aware of the behaviour management techniques used to gain compliance from children.

The home is not operating in line with the statement of purpose. Staff are unclear what the statement of purpose is. The most recent updated version from June 2018 has not

been submitted to Ofsted. This does not provide Ofsted with a current view of the home's operation and arrangements.

Staff have not received practice-led supervision in line with organisational policy. One member of staff had not received a supervision for five months, and another member of staff's appraisal could not be located. This is particularly concerning when there are high numbers of physical interventions because staff need formal opportunities to have documented discussions about their practice and to identify any training needs.

Monthly external monitoring visits are conducted, and the reports submitted to Ofsted. During the inspection it emerged that the independent visitor was aware of the practice of staff escorting children to their bedrooms. Despite this, the monthly reports do not raise the serious safeguarding shortfalls that were identified at this inspection. Consequently, children have not benefited from the additional scrutiny of practice and safeguarding that is intended through the role of the independent visitor.

The staff team is stable and qualified. There are positive working relationships with external professionals.

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: 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: Serena Emberley

Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy: social care inspector

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