

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 six children aged between 11 and 17 years with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2022	Full	Good
07/07/2021	Full	Good
26/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are currently five children living at the home. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on in a planned way. Children continue to keep in touch with staff and children at the home once they have moved. This demonstrates that children develop strong relationships with staff.

Three children have moved into the home since June 2022. They are making variable progress in all areas of their development. Due to several serious incidents, children's experiences and routines have been increasingly disrupted. One child is currently spending time at an alternative address, with support from staff known to the child. This period of respite has benefited all of the children and helped to rebuild a sense of stability at the home.

Education plans are in place for all children, and staff are actively encouraging children with their learning. Managers and staff advocate for the children and their educational needs. Bespoke educational packages have been generated because of this collaborative working. While children's educational attendance and achievement are not where they should be for children's age or ability, there is progress.

The staff have worked hard to develop trusting relationships with the children. They use a nurturing approach that encourages the children to share their feelings and talk about things that are important to them. Staff have helped children to build and maintain relationships with family members. For some children, this has led to seeing a family member who they have not seen for a considerable amount of time. At these times, the staff have provided the emotional and practical support the children need to develop positive family relationships.

The communal areas of the home are welcoming and well maintained. Due to the age of the property and amount of damage, the home requires regular maintenance, which is carried out. However, some of the children's bedrooms are not decorated or maintained to a good enough standard, with marks and graffiti on the walls and stained carpets. Bedroom windows are mouldy and dirty. Bedroom heaters have used debris and rubbish inside. In some bedrooms, the children's furniture is dusty and unclean. This does not create a homely environment for the children.

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

Children's plans are clearly written. Risk assessments for children are detailed and contain risk-reduction strategies. These are regularly reviewed and updated following any changes. Staff produce descriptive incident reports. Professionals' meetings are held regularly for each child. The manager and staff are proactive in their attendance at these meetings. As a result, professionals are well informed, and there is a coordinated response for the children.

The staff are well trained and understand effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities to safeguard the children. Safeguarding concerns are shared appropriately with other professionals. This allows the most relevant professional to respond to any incidents.

Serious incidents have occurred at the home. On occasion, children and staff have been injured during highly volatile situations. Staff respond and take action to de-escalate and reduce the risk of further harm. The staff have called the police for support during some of these incidents. Police involvement has been proportionate and necessary to keep others safe.

Physical intervention is used at times to keep children safe and prevent harm to others. The use of restraint has been appropriate. Children are offered time and support to express their feelings after the restraint. Staff have received debriefs. However, on several occasions, the manager has failed to ensure that the oversight of the restraint was carried out within the required time frame. Delay in oversight means that emerging concerns or issues relating to the restraint could be missed and not responded to promptly.

At times, children smoke in their bedrooms. Staff have been unable to discourage children from picking up and smoking discarded cigarettes when they are out. During the inspection, the fire alarm was activated; however, two children refused to leave the home. This places children at increased risk of harm in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A dedicated and well-experienced management team leads the home. Managers have established excellent relationships with other agencies. This collaborative working helps them to meet children's needs. Professionals are positive about the communication and working relationships with the staff. Concerns for children have been successfully escalated by the managers when a multi-agency response is needed. Children benefit from effective working relationships between managers and external professionals.

The staff speak highly of the managers and say that they feel supported, both personally and professionally. The staff are committed and dedicated to the children. The managers have set a clear example of going above and beyond expectations to support children, and the staff have followed this lead.

Managers have a clear understanding of the progress children are making. They are highly visible and spend time with the children. Recent unsettled times have led to managers providing more support on shift. Subsequently, some managerial tasks, such as regular staff supervision sessions and the monitoring of restraints, have not been completed promptly. This lack of managerial oversight reduces the manager's capacity to monitor the quality of care provided and make continuous improvements.

The manager completes staff performance reviews. However, they do not provide an appraisal of the staff's performance and fitness to perform their roles. Therefore, opportunities to drive staff development are missed.

The quality of care review does not include any feedback from the children living at the home. This weakens the evaluation of the care provided.

Since the last inspection, one requirement has been met. All staff are now trained in fire safety awareness. Three requirements have not been met, and these are restated.

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
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 bedrooms are decorated and maintained to provide a clean, welcoming environment.	20 September 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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 (4)(b)(c)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	20 September 2023
The registered person must ensure that 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")—	20 June 2023

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. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children and staff involved in a restraint are spoken to within the required time frame. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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 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. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	20 September 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff support children to be aware of and manage their own safety, both inside and outside the home, to the extent that any good parent would. In particular, they should ensure that children

understand the risks associated with smoking, especially in their bedrooms, and also the risks of not leaving their bedrooms during a fire evacuation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review includes feedback from children living at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: SC037281

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Registered provider address: Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk
IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Michelle Ashman

Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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