

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. The children may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2022

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: 7 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/07/2021	Full	Good
26/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/04/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, there were four children living at the home. Children have lived at the home a long time and have established trusting relationships with staff. Children's interests and hobbies are encouraged. Children enjoy community-based activities such as football, horse riding and cadets. The staff celebrate achievements with children and talk about the children with pride. This helps to improve children's self-esteem and confidence.

Staff provide high levels of support to children to help them to maintain relationships with their families. Social workers said that the managers and staff are actively involved in supporting meetings between children and their families. As a result, children's relationships with their families flourish.

Children have bespoke education packages that have been designed to meet their individual preferences and needs. However, despite the staff's efforts, not all children are attending school full time or engaging in educational activities. The managers escalate concerns to relevant professionals about the children's attendance and request professionals' meetings when a multi-agency response is needed. The staff and managers appreciate the importance of education and informal learning. They work closely with the children's tutors. As a result, there is a coordinated response to the children's education needs.

Children's meetings are known as 'get togethers' and are held monthly. Children are encouraged to talk about the home and other areas of their lives. On occasions, the meetings have been held spontaneously to talk with the children about safety topics such as starting fires or going missing. On one occasion, the missing-from-care coordinator from the local police joined the meeting. This helps the children's understanding of risks when they leave the home unsupervised, or when they are involved in unsafe activities.

Staff are sensitive to children's mental and emotional health needs. Managers ensure that children's mental health needs are recognised and that referrals for therapy are progressed.

Children enjoy spending time with the staff and managers and feel able to approach them for help. Children can make a complaint or make their feelings known. Managers acknowledge children's complaints in writing and take action to investigate and reply to their concerns. Managers and staff ensure that children's views are listened to and central to their care planning.

The children have their own bathrooms. Staff encourage the children to tidy the bathrooms after they have used them. However, in one bathroom, there were dirty clothes and used personal hygiene products on the floor. This does not help the

children with their understanding of good personal hygiene or encourage independence skills.

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

Children engage in discussions with staff about the issues that are important to them. Staff have helped children to improve their understanding of positive relationships, managing self-harm and sexual health. Conversations with staff increase the children's understanding of the risks of smoking, leaving the home on their own and exploitation. From these discussions, the children gain an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

There have been incidents when children have left the home without permission, or not returned by the agreed time. Staff have responded in line with missing-from-care protocols which are individual to each child. The protocols are reviewed regularly and reflect the levels of risk. Managers make sure that the children are given the opportunity to take part in a return home interview with an external professional. Managers ensure that staff are continually informed about the local area. Consequently, potential concerns are reduced.

Risk assessments are detailed and contain presenting risks. When incidents occur, staff review risk assessments and develop safety plans that provide clear strategies for managing the risks. This helps staff to feel confident in their approach and to be consistent in their responses.

Physical intervention is used appropriately to keep children safe. Staff have received the required training and interventions are recorded thoroughly. Children's views are always recorded after the incident and staff debriefs have taken place. However, on two occasions the manager has failed to ensure that the oversight of the restraint record was completed within the required time frame. This delay in oversight has meant that emerging concerns or issues relating to the restraint were not responded to promptly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a dedicated and well-experienced management team. Managers have established excellent relationships with children's families and other agencies to help them to meet children's needs. The feedback from a parent, social workers and professionals is unanimously positive.

Managers have established a stable and committed staff team. Staff enjoy working at the home. Managers recognise the importance of familiar faces for the children. The staff cover additional shifts and support each other to make sure that there is always the required number of staff available. Agency staff are familiar to the children. Children benefit from consistent and familiar staff at the home each day. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

Staff say that they feel well supported by the managers. However, staff do not receive regular practice-related supervision. This means that they do not benefit from the formal oversight and guidance that they need to support them in their roles.

Newly appointed staff receive a thorough induction which includes a range of training and shadow shifts with experienced staff. Good induction and training help staff to meet children's needs and provide continuity of care.

Thorough training packages are provided for staff. Staff access safeguarding training that helps them to identify concerns of exploitation and increases their awareness of risks posed to the children. Targeted training enables staff to meet children's individual needs. However, not all staff have achieved a relevant level 3 diploma within two years of commencing a care role.

A considerable number of staff have not had fire awareness training. The insufficient number of trained staff was also identified as priority action in the home's fire risk assessment. The manager has failed to address this shortfall and ensure that all staff have had fire awareness training. This lack of training could place children at increased risk of harm.

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
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)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that staff receive fire awareness training.	14 July 2022
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))	22 September 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	20 June 2022

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”)— 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 timeframe.	20 June 2022
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, they should ensure that children’s bathrooms are clean and that all used personal hygiene products are disposed of appropriately. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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 IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Robina Khan

Registered manager: Michelle Ashman

Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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