

SC037281

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to seven children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 21 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The management and staff have worked to address the concerns that were raised at the last inspection. This has resulted in the following improvements:

- The staff benefit from therapeutic involvement from a children's mental health specialist to help them to understand the children's behaviours and how the staff can work to address them.
- The children benefit from direct input from a children's mental health specialist when this is assessed as appropriate for their needs.
- The children's bedrooms are well decorated and furnished.
- Handwritten logs are clearly recorded, which makes it easier for the children and external visitors to review them.

There has been a recent increase in challenging behaviour at the home that has required

police involvement. The home has worked together with the police and the children to reduce this behaviour by creating an agreed consequences contract. However, behaviour management strategies lack clarity, particularly in relation to restricting a child's movement in the home. Unclear recording in physical intervention logs means that the information can be misconstrued when not supported by an explanation from a member of staff. In addition, there is a lack of clarity about agreed and accepted responses to unwanted behaviours, which can lead to inconsistency in managing challenging behaviour.

The home uses two different logs to record physical interventions. One of the logs records restraints while the other records physical interventions. There is no guidance for the staff about which log should be used and when. This results in a variance in recording when staff have to physically intervene with a child. This lack of guidance can leave both staff and children vulnerable, as the children's views are not consistently recorded following a physical intervention.

The home has systems in place for internal and external monitoring of the care provided. An independent visitor attends the home monthly and provides a report on the quality of care that the children receive. The reports sometimes lack challenge. Professional feedback about the home is often absent, and the reports have not been received by Ofsted in a timely way. The most recent internal assessment of the quality of care provided by the home gives a comprehensive review and identifies positives and areas for development at the home.

The staff are positive about the support that they receive from the management team and said that they receive regular supervision in a variety of different ways. However, alternative ways of providing staff supervision are not always recorded effectively. This puts staff at risk of being unclear about the agreed outcomes following these important meetings to reflect on practice.

The home has a clear focus on the importance of education, with all but one of the children in full-time education. This child receives education at the home from several tutors. One tutor said, '[The child] is always happy and speaks positively about the home. If he is set homework, he always does it, and is encouraged to do so by the staff.'

There are positive relationships with external professionals from a range of disciplines. A police officer said, 'They [the staff] manage conflict at the home well. They equip and support the children to move on, and make massive progress with them.'

The staff create a welcoming atmosphere and an encouraging, homely environment. The relationships between the staff and children are positive and strong. The staff promote and facilitate contact between the children and their families, which provides the children with opportunities to make good progress as positive relationships are developed and maintained with their families. One child said, 'If I ever needed to make a complaint, I would speak to [the manager], but I would not make a complaint as there is nothing to complain about.'

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
10/03/2016	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 registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35(2)) In particular, review and update any behaviour management strategies that may constitute a deprivation of liberty.	15/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint, 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, ensure that staff understand the recording formats. Provide clear guidance to staff about recording physical interventions and the terminology used to describe physical intervention and restraint.	15/03/2018
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a)) In particular, ensure that the submission of reports to HMCI is timely.	15/03/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33(4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
In particular, ensure that monthly supervision sessions are recorded on staff members' supervision files.

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 address: Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Serena Emberley

Inspector(s)

Ricky D'Arcy, social care inspector

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