

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 left in June 2024.

At the time of the inspection there were five children living at the home. All children were spoken to by the inspectors and contributed to the inspection.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 17 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2022	Full	Good
07/07/2021	Full	Good
26/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, the staff and children have moved to a temporary home that is registered with Ofsted. This is while renovations are carried out to their home. The renovations have not been finished in the planned time frame. This has resulted in the children living in accommodation that is below standard and poses several risks. Although these were addressed during the inspection, they have been accepted because of the temporary use. There are shortfalls regarding hazards, accessibility to areas of the home and fire prevention measures that could pose a risk to children's safety.

Since the last inspection, three children have moved out of the home and one child has moved in. This is despite being in temporary accommodation that is not of a good enough quality. All children have moved in a planned way. The last child to move in has made strong progress.

The home is not warm or welcoming. Some of the rooms are cold with ineffective heating and minimal soft furnishings. There are no pictures, games, books or items of interest in communal areas. Furniture is minimal and there are items that are damaged beyond repair. In most rooms there are no window coverings, including the bedrooms and the living room. This creates an institutionalised stark feel that fails to give children a sense of comfort or belonging.

Despite the shortfalls, staff do their absolute best for children. Staff invest in their relationships with children. They offer time, patience, consistency and kindness. The staff follow the ethos of the home and provide nurturing care. The children have developed positive trusting relationships with managers and staff. These have supported children's good progress.

Staff create lots of opportunities for the children. They took two children to a professional football training ground, where they met their idols. All the children have been to a holiday park together with staff. One child has visited a theme park. These experiences have given children opportunities to improve their relationships with each other and to create memories that will last a lifetime.

Children's health needs are met. The children are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. When children request support for their health, the staff listen to them. Staff supported one child to stop taking long-term prescribed medication with advice from medical professionals. This will improve the child's long-term health.

Staff understand the importance of education. All children now have appropriate education provisions, which they are encouraged and supported to attend. Consequently, children are progressing academically.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The bedrooms and communal rooms are accessible using an electronic key fob. Therefore, the children do not have access to all the rooms without asking staff. This is not necessary or proportionate. When staff attempt to give children free access to communal rooms, fire doors are wedged open, creating a fire hazard.

One child has risks linked to fire. They have not been provided with support from specialist agencies. Staff have not had any specific training to understand or offer the child appropriate support to minimise this risk.

The home's fire-risk assessment is out of date. The fire safety equipment requires assessment and repair. As this was identified at the inspection, arrangements were made to have the equipment assessed.

This temporary stay has significantly exceeded the original time frame. Repair work has not been a priority. The home is being used to store boxes from the move. There are windows that have been boarded up and a broken sky light. The inspection identified several concerns, including ceiling tiles that had been broken leaving electrical wires exposed and a sink that had been left blocked for several weeks. These aspects pose a risk to children and were addressed when pointed out at the inspection.

Children go missing from the home regularly to be with their friends. Managers have arranged a multi-agency meeting to share information and create safety plans to support the children's friendships safely. This should encourage a reduction in children leaving the home.

When children are facing difficulties, staff are proactive, thoughtful and responsive. This provides children with consideration and supports them to develop more positive behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is registered at the home undergoing refurbishment. There is no registered manager at this home. They have not reviewed the appropriateness of the location of the premises of the home within the year or consulted with other agencies about the safety of the local area.

Notifications to Ofsted are not always made in a timely manner. Some notifications have been received several days after the incident took place. Although managers have taken other necessary action in respect of the incidents, the failure to notify Ofsted promptly hinders Ofsted's ability to regulate the home.

The manager is qualified and dedicated to her role. She knows the children well and is aspirational for them. External professionals are positive about the support offered and

feel that the children have made progress. Staff talk positively about the support that they receive, including regular supervision sessions. This offers staff effective support and ongoing professional development.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. There is an induction process for new staff, which helps them to learn their roles.

The management team advocates for the children when services are not meeting their needs. For example, when a child was requesting time with their family, managers challenged the barriers and now support the child to spend time with their parent.

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 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 repairs and refurbishment are completed promptly.	8 April 2025
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))	8 April 2025
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is necessary and proportionate; allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(ii)(iv))	8 April 2025

The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's homes overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; 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) (2)(c)(i))	8 April 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	8 April 2025
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	8 April 2025

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: Babergh District Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Glynn Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Sarah Cooper, Social Care Inspector
Russel Breyer, His Majesty's Inspector

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