

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 for up to seven children aged between eight and 17. The children may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable. The registered manager left the home on 21 January 2020. A new manager recently joined the home and is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 26 February 2020

Date of last inspection: 11 April 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

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 declined in effectiveness.

The provider has met the three requirements that were raised at the last inspection but has not met the two recommendations. These have been raised as requirements at this inspection.

The home has had three changes of manager since the last inspection in April 2019. Lack of consistent leadership has had an impact on the stability of the staff team and the well-being of the children. Despite this, some of the staff have worked at the home for many years and are positive about the new manager who has joined the home.

At the time of the inspection, the home's statement of purpose had not been updated and sent to Ofsted. This fails to provide Ofsted with an up-to-date view of the home's operational arrangements. The home has changed the age range of children that it admits, and the statement of purpose does not reflect this or the current management arrangements.

Since the last inspection, four new children have come to live at the home and one child has left. Staff supported a planned transition for the child who left the home. This child needed a more specialist provision and the staff worked together to ensure that his transition was positive. This included some staff working additional hours to support the move. Matching of the children who moved into the home is of variable quality. While all the children had a detailed matching impact assessment prior to admission, there were some predictable risks from admitting these children that have not been adequately mitigated. This has resulted in volatile behaviour that has had a negative and unsettling impact on all the children.

Two older teenagers have come to live at the home alongside four younger children, who often display challenging behaviour. One child, who recently moved in, said that she is regularly disrupted during the night by the other children shouting and screaming. This child said that she thought that the rules of the home were aimed at much younger children, and that this is unfair. A staff member said that the staff are not experienced in caring for teenagers. The staff are struggling to meet all the children's diverse needs, and this is resulting in conflict between children.

The home requires updating. Although some areas of the home are freshly painted in bright colours, the size of the property and damage caused by the children presents challenges to maintaining the home to an acceptable standard. The children's bathrooms are bare and there is damage to bath panels. One toilet did not have a seat or a lid. A child's bedroom contained a large area of damp on the ceiling. In addition, the staff have been unable to prevent the children from causing

significant damage to the home. The regularity of incidents means that there are several hazards. Repairs have not been actioned promptly, therefore the home is not welcoming and child-friendly.

The staff have tried to implement boundaries on internet use. When the Wi-Fi is turned off in the evening this is sometimes a trigger to incidents. A child said that these incidents can go on late into the night. One child was able to go into the office at night during an incident and destroy phones, take money from a drawer and cause damage to a computer. The home does not yet have effective measures in place to prevent these incidents overnight. The recently appointed manager has started to work with the staff to create a consistent response to the children's behaviours. The staff are positive about the guidance offered but this is in the early stages and is not yet embedded in practice.

There is significant conflict between the children. The staff have not always been able to intervene before the children have injured each other. There have been incidents of bullying that included name-calling, punching, kicking, and a child causing deliberate damage to another child's bedroom. Following these incidents, the staff spoke with the children about their behaviour. The staff have undertaken some anti-bullying workshops with the children. However, this work has not reduced the levels of negative behaviour and some children continue to be intimidated and assaulted. Some of these incidents have not been recorded in the home's bullying log. This does not enable effective management review of the incidents. The ongoing bullying means that the children do not feel relaxed and safe in their living environment.

Changes to staffing and an increase in the number of children who live at the home have resulted in the children feeling unsettled. Although the home is not currently short-staffed, the staffing has not been increased to meet the changing needs of the children. One child's referral paperwork said that he required one-to-one staffing. However, since this child's admission, three more children have moved in and the staffing levels no longer match with the child's admission plans.

The staff team is committed to promoting children's learning. The children are encouraged to attend school. Most children have a school place and one child is waiting to attend a new school. This child has been engaged in activities including attending a dance group. The home has a range of toys and craft materials. The staff cook with the children and take them out on activities and trips.

Social workers said that the staff care about the children and want the best for them. The staff display high levels of emotional warmth towards the children. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of the children's histories and the trauma behind some of their more challenging behaviours. They listen to the children's views. The home has good links with the local child mental health service, which provides regular consultation with the staff team.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/04/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Inadequate
21/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/09/2017	Full	Good

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— 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))	31/03/2020
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;	31/03/2020

understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(ii)(iv)(xi)(xii)(xiii))	
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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	31/03/2020
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(d)(e))	31/03/2020
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	31/03/2020

Information about this inspection

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.

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: Clifford James

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Angela Weston, Social Care Inspector

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