

SC063110

Suffolk County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to five female children, aged between 11 and 17, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 1 February 2018

This monitoring visit

A monitoring visit was undertaken by a social care regulatory inspector on 1 February 2018, following receipt of a high number of notifications that raised concerns.

The visit identified several shortfalls. The home has not done enough to prevent children placing themselves at risk and to ensure that the children are properly safeguarded. The location risk assessment includes some risk factors, although it fails to fully consider some of the immediate risks to the children, or how to reduce these. An example is the risk of a child running into the busy road outside the home, and requiring staff intervention. The manager has failed to fully identify what action is needed to reduce potential risks. A failure to change the physical environment or provide staff with the resources to respond effectively to risky situations means that risks of harm to children remain.

The home receives external monthly visits by an independent person. However, due to an administration error, Ofsted had not received these reports in the timescale required. The reports have since been sent in to Ofsted. Failure to submit these reports in a timely manner prevents Ofsted from monitoring the quality of care provided. In addition, the independent person does not provide their evaluation of the safeguarding and well-being of the children living at the home. This shortfall fails to demonstrate the effectiveness of the home in keeping children safe.

The staff report that the management team provides support. However, some staff have not received supervision within the required timescales. This shortfall means that during a period of challenging behaviour the staff have not had a formal meeting to discuss concerns.

The staff work with the children to encourage them keep their rooms tidy and personalised. One bedroom has been recently been painted, providing a homely feel. The communal areas are sufficiently maintained, and all of the hallways have new carpets. However, other parts of the accommodation have not been adequately maintained following damage caused by the children. A number of blinds have been removed from windows, and the upstairs hallway to the bedrooms appears tired and worn. A child's radiator cover is damaged, and this now exposes sharp metal. A number of the bedroom carpets are stained, and bedroom doors and walls require repainting. The home is unwelcoming and is not an environment that the children value.

The children's behaviours include a significant number of assaults on staff, verbal and physical abuse, allegations against staff and damage to the home. Risk-taking behaviours include overdoses on medication and running into the road. The staff respond to the majority of these situations appropriately. The high level of incidents means that the staff are under increasing and continual pressure. Therefore, further support is required to ensure that the staff are provided with an opportunity to reflect on their work at the end of each shift. The staff do not consistently implement the agreed strategies to help the children to manage their emotions and the impact of high-level incidents. For example, key-work sessions are not consistently undertaken in a timely manner following incidents. There are occasions when planned strategies are not used to de-escalate situations. This shortfall has an impact on the staff members' ability to reduce the level of incidents occurring at the home.

The inspector found that the management team is aware of the majority of these concerns, and has taken some actions to reduce the number of incidents. The smoke alarms had been made defective. In response, the local authority's health and safety adviser is visiting the home to advise on this and ensure that the alarms will work effectively. A staff meeting is arranged for next week, with a focus on considering strategies and identifying effective and consistent approaches to reduce the behavioural incidents. The management team has provided additional supervision meetings for the staff without the home's managers present. These extra supervisions are to enable the staff to speak about the current situation. The management team has raised concerns to senior managers and placing social workers. The managers have considered the concerning behaviours, associated risks and the impact on other children living at the home. Joint discussions are taking place to review additional measures and actions that are required to keep children safe and fully meet their needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/07/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/04/2017	Full	Inadequate
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/04/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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 and 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 purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i))	30/03/2018
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 are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same, and de-escalate confrontations with or between children or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(x)(xi))	30/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	30/03/2018
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded, and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b)(7)(a))	30/03/2018
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the	28/02/2018

purpose 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). (Regulation 46(1))

This is with regard to reviewing the location of the premises following incidents in the home, to reduce the risk to children.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC063110

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

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

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Justin Fenn

Inspector

Natalie Burton, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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