

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC063110
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, IPSWICH, IP1 2BX

Responsible individual	Clifford James
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspectors	Louisa Bayley Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	03/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC063110

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Some aspects of the physical environment require attention, including a bathroom ceiling that has a significant patch of mould and a broken fence panel, which compromises the security of the grounds.
- The provider has not met a previous requirement to ensure that records of restraint are recorded in line with regulation.
- During the past year, until recently, staff have had concerns about the leadership of the home but have not felt able to whistle blow.
- Clarity is required in young people's plans in relation to the action staff should take to prevent bullying.
- Managers and staff do not fully evidence the outcomes of young people's views and wishes.
- The home requires consistent leadership from a permanent manager.
- Clarity is required in the arrangements for contact between young people and those significant to them.
- The location risk assessment requires broadening to capture the range of risks and opportunities the locality presents.
- Internal monitoring does not currently contain a clear analysis of presenting issues in the home; there is a lack of analysis of patterns and trends in areas such as bullying.
- A complaint made to Ofsted in respect of bullying between young people has been investigated during this inspection. The records in the home and discussion with young people demonstrate that the issues have been taken seriously by staff. Robust action has been taken to assure young people's safety.

The children's home strengths

- Young people benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with staff who care about them.
- There has been a reduction in incidents of going missing and substance misuse for some young people. Staff work with other professionals to promote safety by identifying and acting on risks, such as child sexual exploitation.
- The majority of young people are engaged in education; one young person is volunteering in the local community and has a college placement planned.
- Staff support onward transitions, ensuring that young people have the opportunity for positive disengagement from the home.
- Feedback from external professionals is positive; they recognise the impact of the home in supporting young people to make progress.
- Staff advocate on behalf of young people, challenging decisions around contact where this is identified as an issue for young people.
- Interim management arrangements have had a positive impact on the way the home operates.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to the premises the registered person must ensure: (2) (d) 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.	31/08/2015
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1) (a))	28/09/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made, which includes a description of the measure used and its duration and discussion with the user about the measure. The registered person should sign the record to confirm it is accurate. Within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person should add to the record that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (a) (iv) (b) (i) (ii))	31/08/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that young people can see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- Ensure staff understand what they must do to prevent bullying of children by other children or adults. Staff should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse such as peer abuse, cyber-bullying and bullying in day to day relationships in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 39, paragraph 8.16)
- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's internal whistleblowing procedures.

(The Guide to Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.9)

- Ensure both the arrangements for contact and any contact details (telephone numbers etc.) are included in the placement plan agreed between the registered person and the child's placing authority and updated regularly. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 58, paragraph 11.15)
- Review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home and include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- Ensure that the Regulation 45 reviews are based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and include any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They should also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to five female young people aged between 11 and 17 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2014	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/06/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
03/10/2013	CH - Full	Adequate
07/08/2013	CH - Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Some aspects of the physical environment of the home require attention. The shower room has an accumulation of black mould, which is significant and is a potential health risk. It is unacceptable for young people to be expected to use the shower room in this condition. The fence in the garden that backs onto the park and ride service is broken. This compromises the security of the garden, particularly given some of the known risks identified in the area. Young people are encouraged to participate in the running of the home and to express their views. Staff do not always evidence how views are acted upon, missing opportunities to increase young people's perception of their views being valued. The placement plan for one young person does not include sufficient clarity regarding contact arrangements. Contact is a significant issue for the young person. It is important that there is clear and precise information available to guide staff in order to promote this important part of young people's lives. Interactions between staff and young people are warm and relaxed. One professional said: 'Relationships are very good. They are very relaxed, comfortable and positive. There is lots of positive feedback. I have been very happy when I have come out to see her.' One young person spoke positively about her relationship with staff: 'It's helped me because my other placements have broken down. I know they are not going to give up on me. I know I am safe and I know I am cared for. If you are upset, they are always there for you to talk to.' Staff make efforts to enable young people to benefit from an education. This is having varying levels of success. There is evidence of staff effectively supporting young people to sustain attendance at school and to access new education opportunities. For some, this has resulted in improved attendance and engagement. One young person has successfully completed her GCSEs and has started voluntary work in the community in order to prepare herself for her college placement in September. Staff support existing education placements and engage with education providers to promote education opportunities on an individual basis. Staff support young people to engage with health professionals, including mental health. They put young people in touch with substance misuse agencies and provide access to external support, such as the children's rights officer. Individual needs are documented and a network of support is put in place to offer young	

people the help they need in all areas of their physical and mental health.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Managers have not met a requirement raised at the previous inspection relating to the recording of restraint. Although restraint is used very rarely, on the occasions when it has occurred, it is not clear who has written the records or the duration of the incident. There is no record of a debrief by managers. This means that opportunities to review practice are missed and does not promote reflection on incidents. Young people have behaviour management plans and risk assessments. One of the plans lacks clarity in respect of alertness to bullying. The plan talks generically about bullying. This is an issue for a young person who has suffered from bullying in the past. Staff require clear guidance to ensure they are able to prevent bullying incidents. There is a location risk assessment in place but it lacks depth and reflection of the range of risks and opportunities in the locality. Consequently, some aspects of safety are not fully considered. There has been some reduction in risk taking behaviour such as going missing and substance misuse. The police are clear that the home has contributed to a reduction in risky behaviour. An officer said: 'I think the home has done a great job. There is joint work between social care, the home and the police. Beforehand she was on a downwards spiral and we were very worried about her. The home has managed the boundaries well.' Young people know how to complain and how to use the 'I want you to know' system. Staff respond, take issues seriously and they provide young people with a record of proposed actions. Staff ask individuals if they are happy for their concerns to be shared with other staff, they offer advocacy and check that young people are happy with the action being taken. It is clear that staff take forward the issues young people raise. This promotes a sense of safety and security. Managers and staff understand the process for reporting concerns about adults in the home. They follow procedures and ensure that they take direction from the local designated officer in respect of subsequent action. This action ensures that unsuitable people do not have access to the home. Bullying has been an issue in the home. Some young people have been frightened	

and intimidated by others. They have felt able to raise their concerns with staff and staff have taken those concerns seriously. This has resulted in placements being reviewed and suitable transitions onwards to ensure that all young people are safe. Young people spoken to confirm that staff have spent time talking to them to understand the difficulties they have faced and how it has made them feel.

There is clear evidence of good communication between the staff, the police and multi-agency professionals to safeguard young people. Some young people do present with some significant risks, such as child sexual exploitation. These are identified and managers pursue concerns with external professionals, including the police and social workers and support agencies. The awareness of risk supports staff to identify where concerns escalate and to put pressure on to promote action by other agencies.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
There is currently no Registered Manager in the home. The previous manager left in May 2015. Interim arrangements have been effective and a temporary manager has taken up post while recruitment continues for a substantive post holder. During the past year, some staff have had concerns about the management of the home. They did not feel able to take their concerns higher, which meant they were unable to express their views to managers overseeing the home. Staff say they do now feel able to express themselves. It is imperative that all staff are aware of whistleblowing procedures to ensure transparency and promote safety and good levels of care for young people. Internal monitoring lacks analysis and there is no clarity on what happens as a result of feedback from young people. Consequently, the monitoring does not promote identification of areas for development specific to young people's presenting needs. Managers have addressed the two recommendations raised at the previous inspection. There is a development plan in place with a focus on securing improvement. Senior managers recognise the strengths of the home and understand the importance of securing a strong, experienced and committed manager to lead the home. Discussion with the head of care shows that there is insight at that level of the issues in recruitment and retention. She has invited senior leaders in the authority to the home. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of the work staff do and	

how poor pay damages the opportunities to recruit qualified and experienced staff.

Acting managers have identified gaps in communication and put systems in place to make improvements. Staff say they feel better informed when they start their shift and more in touch with plans and information for young people.

Staff say that following a period of low morale, they feel supported by acting managers. They receive regular supervision that gives them time for reflection on their practice and the difference they make to young people's lives.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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