

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 four girls aged between eight and 17 who may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had a traumatic experience that has left them vulnerable.

The home has been without a registered manager since 13 January 2020. A new manager joined the home in March 2020. Ofsted has not received a complete application for registration of the manager.

Inspection date: 3 November 2020

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken with some remote inspection activity due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this visit was to monitor compliance with notices served by Ofsted following an assurance visit in September 2020. The assurance visit found serious and widespread concerns in the leadership and safeguarding at the home.

Although the provider has not met all the actions that were set out in the compliance notices, they have made sufficient progress to improve children's safety and the environment. Due to the progress made and further development plans in place, the remaining shortfalls will be addressed through statutory requirements.

At this monitoring visit, the inspector reviewed the statutory requirements that were raised at the assurance visit. The provider has met one requirement and four requirements are repeated. An additional requirement has been raised in respect of notifying Ofsted of significant incidents at the home.

Although some shortfalls remain, there are no immediate serious safety concerns. However, some children's individual progress remains limited. The staff are taking steps to address negative behaviours to reduce the influence of these behaviours

and the impact on other children. Managers are offering staff guidance to help them to manage serious incidents. The children are being helped by the staff to reflect on their behaviour and to learn strategies to manage relationships.

Improvements have been made to the children's bedrooms and bathrooms. The children have new beds and fresh bedding. Walls have been painted to cover graffiti. New furniture and curtains have been purchased. This helps the children to feel valued, and the environment feels homely. However, one child's room still lacks personalisation.

The quality of risk assessments has improved. Measures to prevent the children taking keys and gaining access to confidential paperwork have been effective. The staff understand the steps that they should take to ensure that children are cared for safely and that risks are reduced.

Some of the children smoke. Managers have introduced new guidance on what to do if the children smoke in the home. New measures to stop children smoking indoors were discussed with the staff team prior to being introduced. This gave the staff a consistent message about expectations and an opportunity to discuss new ways of working. Although there is still work to do to ensure that children hand in lighters, the staff have pulled together to intervene when children smoke at the home. This is keeping the children safer.

Children have been consulted about new rules at the home. Managers and staff listened to the feedback from the children. This feedback influenced new behaviour management plans. Seeking children's views and talking through changes in management of behaviour ensure that children are clear about what is expected of them.

Staff have been offered guidance on how to implement clear boundaries. A new daily plan is in place to give the staff and children an understanding of what to expect during the day. This approach to behaviour management improves consistency and helps the children to feel safer. Improvements are beginning to take effect, but the home continues to be unsettled overnight.

Incidents of self-harm have reduced. Steps have been taken to reduce a child's access to items that could be used to self-harm. A child's bedroom has been rearranged to manage these risks. Staff intervene to try and prevent children from harming themselves.

One child regularly goes missing from the home. Some of the children go missing together. Staff are taking the necessary action to follow protocols, but the frequency of incidents is increasing. Staff are working closely with other professionals to try and prevent risks to children when they go missing. The staff keep in touch with missing children and offer a warm welcome when a child returns.

All the children have an education provision, but two children do not attend regularly. One child does attend education. However, incidents late at night mean that children do not consistently have healthy sleep patterns, which is not helpful to ensuring good education routines.

Opportunities for children who are not at school to engage in learning during the school day are limited. One child who does not attend school said that she is bored and would like more one-to-one time going out on activities with staff. Lockdown restrictions have reduced the availability of some activities. However, the staff have not taken steps to deliver a programme of activity that captures the individual interests of the children. This means that some of the children's educational progress is slow.

There has been some progress in management oversight of incidents. The manager is provided with updates from staff about significant events. Managers' comments are added to records following incidents. However, these comments do not go far enough to evaluate staff's practice or to identify learning to inform future practice. For example, staff turned off the electricity to a child's bedroom to try and de-escalate an incident in the early hours of the morning. Although the manager had reviewed the record of this event, no comment was made in the review about this measure of control and there was no reflection with the member of staff about the use of a measure that falls outside of a child's plans.

Arrangements for monitoring the maintenance of the building have improved. New systems for checking the condition of the home have been introduced. This ensures that repairs are undertaken quickly, and that the accommodation is safe.

There has been a review of arrangements for independent monitoring. Increased maintenance checks have been introduced. Video tours of the accommodation and talking to children remotely during periods of lockdown help to provide more robust external oversight.

Monitoring of staff training has improved. The manager ensures that there is always a member of staff on shift who has completed first-aid training. There are plans to ensure that new staff receive training to help them to understand the children's needs.

Ofsted was not informed of a series of significant events that occurred during one evening. This shortfall meant that Ofsted did not have all the necessary information to monitor the quality of care or to determine if the children are safeguarded.

The requirement for ensuring that staff are suitably vetted before coming to work in the home is carried over from the assurance visit. This is because the checks undertaken by employment agencies are not overseen by the manager, therefore the manager cannot be assured that the staff coming to work in the home are suitable.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/08/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(viii)) In particular, ensure that children are supported to fully attend school and that they arrive on time, and that children benefit from good routines that prepare them for school attendance and engagement.	11/12/2020
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;	11/12/2020

that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect the child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(b)(d))	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h))	11/12/2020
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	11/12/2020

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; 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)(b)(c)(e))	11/12/2020
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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: Post vacant

Inspector

Angela Weston, Social Care Inspector

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