

SC063110

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 five girls aged between 11 and 17. The manager has been registered at this home since 2017.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 April 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 19 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)) This is with particular regard to ensuring that risk assessments and missing-from-home protocols include up-to-date and relevant information.	27/04/2018
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))	27/04/2018
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measure may not be used to discipline any child— any punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink. (Regulation 19 (1)(2)(b))	27/04/2018
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'), or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma, by the relevant date. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home;	26/10/2018

or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(5)(a)(b))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy for the prevention of bullying in the home, which must in particular set out the procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying. (Regulation 34 (3)) This is with regard to the specific recording, monitoring and review of incidents of bullying.	27/04/2018
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate, and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff understand the recording formats. Provide clear guidance to staff about recording physical interventions and the terminology used to describe physical intervention and restraint.	27/04/2018
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the 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 particular regard to ensuring that responses to identified risks are known by staff and that appropriate action is taken. This includes, but is not limited to, mitigating risks relating to the gate, the use of the grab bag, and ensuring that the children are aware of local risks.	27/04/2018

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that children can access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both in and out of the home (when appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
In particular, ensure that recruitment records reflect good employment practice and are sufficiently clear to demonstrate what efforts have been made to identify why applicants have left previous roles working with children or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that any records kept electronically enable information to be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been through a period of instability. This has recently improved. The staff have good relationships with the children despite a number of serious incidents. A social worker said, 'They [the staff] are very in tune with the child's needs and she relates really well with the staff there.'

The staff understand the children's complex backgrounds, and they reflect on incidents to develop the children's capacity to empathise. The children find the staff helpful and supportive. Frequent one-to-one time with the staff helps the children to form trusting relationships and reflect on patterns of unhelpful behaviour.

The children have no established community-based activities or opportunities to meet peers outside the home. This does not foster the children's interests or provide enough structure. There are periods of time during which the children are open to peer influences, some of which can be negative. The lack of structure contributes to the high number of incidents at the home.

The home has sustained damage, following incidents, that has been repaired. However, repairs and minimal decor have left some rooms looking stark and institutional. The ground floor of the home is generally clean. However, some bedrooms are not. Food remnants, crockery, cosmetics on the floor and an unattached curtain in one bedroom were all evident. Furthermore, the children do not have access to all communal areas. At times, the staff lock the second reception room without clear rationale. The lack of care fails to provide a positive environment or accessible home for the children.

All of the children have an education provision. One child is educated at the home, and

attends an educational farm two days a week. Attendance in education is mixed for the majority of the children. The staff work hard to reduce barriers to attendance. They attend meetings, encourage engagement and work closely with education professionals to increase the children's attendance. The staff have identified an agreed education placement for new admissions. This supports a culture of educational engagement and reduces breaks in the children's education.

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

The management of risk reduction is poor. Known behaviours, such as taking keys from the staff and children accessing the office and medication are not recorded in the children's behaviour management plans or risk assessments. The children's vulnerability to bullying is not included in these plans. The risk assessments do not provide the staff with accurate overviews of the risks that the children are likely to experience, which increases the likelihood that these risks will be realised.

The location risk assessment includes consideration of the risks posed by the nearby road in respect of children running into it. However, the actions that are identified to mitigate risk have not yet taken place. Staff are unaware of an emergency grab bag that the manager was unable to locate during the inspection. This makes the assessment of risk ineffective.

Bullying has reduced. However, incidents that are recognised as bullying behaviour between the children are frequently not recorded in the bullying record log. In one instance, despite a child voicing their fears to the staff, there was a significant delay in managerial oversight of the record and the child's views being sought. The recording offers limited scope for reviewing incidents, identifying patterns or trends and informing responses.

The staff respond appropriately to the children leaving the home without agreement. However, the missing-from-home protocols are not informed by the learning derived from incidents of children going missing and return interviews. This lessens opportunities for staff to reduce the likelihood of children going missing.

Behaviour management lacks a clear approach. While staff offer positive reinforcement for children, five recorded consequences show that staff frequently use the removal of snack boxes as a sanction. This contradicts the behaviour management policy. This practice also fails to relate the incident to the consequence. The staff's behaviour management does not always provide a restorative approach from which the children can learn.

There has been an increase in the number of physical restraints. Although these are proportionate, changes to the recording systems have resulted in a lack of clarity for staff. Consequently, some restraints are not being recorded as such, and records do not contain all of the information required. The records fail to provide an accurate overview of the number of interventions or sufficient detail of the incidents. This means that the

monitoring to identify trends and reduce incidents is ineffective.

Recruitment files do not fully demonstrate the efforts made to identify why applicants have left previous roles working with children or vulnerable adults. This lack of clarity does not demonstrate good professional curiosity to provide safe recruitment practice.

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

The home is managed by a registered manager who is well qualified for the role. The staff team is established and shows resilience in the support and care of the children through volatile periods.

There are examples of management tasks being overdue and new systems that are unclear. Staff sickness and a number of incidents have affected managerial capacity. However, several of the shortfalls have been raised previously. Staff support and supervision have been identified as shortfalls by Ofsted on several occasions. While the frequency of managerial supervision has recently improved, the records are held electronically and the manager was unable to provide these on request. This makes it difficult to test the quality of supervision and support provided to staff during difficult periods.

The statement of purpose has not been updated and sent into Ofsted since June 2017. This is despite changes to staffing and other revisions. This fails to provide relevant and up-to-date information to Ofsted and others.

There are staff who should have completed a relevant level 3 qualification who have not done so within the requisite timescale. However, these staff are working towards this and have access to a range of relevant training opportunities. Reflective team sessions provide a forum for the staff to explore the feelings that are evoked by working through periods of intense challenge.

Professionals consistently gave good feedback about the service and the manager in particular. Multi-agency working is a strength. One professional said, 'Communication is really good. Everyone involved is always kept up to date.'

There are some signs of improvement. The home has recently settled. The staff team provides stability for the children, and management of the home is consistent

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC063110

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Justin Fenn

Inspectors

Deirdra Keating, social care inspector

Ashley Hinson, social care inspector

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