

SC063110

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 six children aged between 8 and 17 who may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had a traumatic experience that has left them vulnerable and who may find it difficult to manage in society.

The manager has been registered since 2017.

Inspection date: 7 August 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 4 April 2018

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 requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

At the full inspection in April 2018, seven requirements and five recommendations were raised. At this inspection, three requirements and one recommendation remain unmet, three of which have been identified repeatedly throughout the home's inspection history, demonstrating limited capacity to improve.

The children are not safeguarded effectively. An incident that was observed and overheard by the staff on 3 May 2018, in which children barricaded themselves into a bedroom, was not prevented. Three incidents of sexualised behaviour are alleged to have taken place since March 2018. Two of these disclosures are under police investigation. Senior managers made arrangements to move one child out of the home

in July 2018 as a result of these incidents, pending the investigation. Following these incidents, the manager made plans for 'Make a Change' work but only one session took place. The manager said that the session did not work out well, and that a pack was ordered to use with the children. However, at the point of the inspection, the pack had not been used despite the incident occurring in May 2018. Despite clear indicators that a child was instigating inappropriate contact, there has been a failure to provide adequate safeguards.

Despite reports of three serious safeguarding incidents involving three children at the home, only one child has an updated risk assessment. There is a lack of strategy and direction to prevent future incidents. Children continue to go into each other's bedrooms and staff have failed to prevent this. There is no clear guidance as to whether this is permissible or safe. This fails to safeguard children.

A child who arrived at the home three weeks ago following a hospital admission for a self-injury has no risk assessment or placement plan. This is despite presenting with a recent history of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and a traumatic background. Although an email was sent to the staff to state how to respond to ligature incidents, not all staff are fully aware of risks or the best strategy to reduce these risks. One member of staff has not received training in how to respond to a ligature incident and was not able to accurately state where the ligature cutters are stored, despite a child moving into the home with a recent incident of making improvised ligatures. A mark to a child's neck was noted by the inspector during the inspection. However, there was no risk assessment to reflect the incident or guide staff in how to minimise risk.

Children are not central to their care planning and their views are not respected. One child's belongings had not been collected for three weeks, despite requests made to the manager by the child. This left the child without appropriate clothing and minimal belongings in the initial weeks of her placement. A planned child in care review meeting took place with the registered manager, social worker and independent reviewing officer. The child was not made aware of this by either the manager or her social worker. This left the child feeling angry and deceived as she had been waiting to speak to her social worker. The child said, 'I feel as if I have just been dumped here and no one cares.'

Missing from home incidents have increased. They involve children leaving together for short periods of time. This has resulted in a child, who had not previously been missing before she came to the home, going missing. Since April 2018, this child has been reported missing from home on five occasions. This is not reflected in her risk assessment, which stated that missing from home incidents are rare. A professional working with the child reported, 'She now goes missing and takes risks due to the influences of others.' The staff have a missing from home procedure to ensure the children's safe return, and they generally follow this. However, one child had no missing from home protocol written until she had left the home on two occasions. This child did not know the area and the lack of protocol made the incident difficult to manage, therefore increasing the risks to the child.

There continue to be tense dynamics in the home. Two children spoken to during the

inspection cite regular bullying and feel intimidated by others. Incidents that include shouting, name-calling, damage to the home and physical assaults are regular. One child was chased through the home by another child with a chair and a large branch. The child had shower gel poured over her face and in her eyes. The staff feared for the safety of both children and themselves and called the police.

The children are intimidated by the tensions at the home and do not feel safe. Each child stated that the staff want to help and try to prevent these incidents but are unsuccessful. One child said, 'The staff do try and stop us but can't stop the arguments.' A second child said, 'I am not happy here and don't always feel safe.' Another said, 'I trust and like the staff but they can't stop [the bullying], it just carries on.' A social worker said about her child, 'She is being bullied and felt scared. They [the children] should never have been left together.'

Incidents are recorded and follow-up work is evident. However, the incidents are not all categorised as bullying. This makes the oversight and effect on individual children difficult to monitor, reducing the staff's ability to coordinate a preventive response.

Environmental concerns about the location and the standard of decor continue. A previous response to a shortfall raised about the location risk assessment has not been met. The actions identified at the inspection in February 2018 as necessary to reduce risks following several incidents of children going into the road have not been undertaken, despite six months passing. The first floor of the home needs refurbishment. The bedroom carpets in two rooms are dirty and stained. The wet room and toilet floors are stained. There is an overpowering smell of urine in the children's toilet. This fails to provide a safe, welcome and homely environment for children.

The management tasks are not being carried out effectively. Managerial oversight of records and the day-to-day management of the home are poor. The manager went to the hospital to collect a new child during a period in which two other children were unsettled; there had been two assaults on staff and another child was in hospital following a suspected overdose. The manager failed to ensure that the child was admitted to a stable and safe environment. The manager failed to organise the child's induction, leaving the child without a placement plan, risk assessment, her belongings or information about her care review. This lack of planning caused the child anxiety and distress and placed her at risk.

There is a lack of direction regarding the management and prevention of behavioural incidents. Despite a number of recent incidents, there have been no recorded consequences for the last five weeks. This sudden reduction in consequences has not been identified by the manager, who has failed to correlate consequences with the incidents. Lack of consequences for negative behaviours means that children are not provided with consistent boundaries and does not help children to reflect on their mistakes.

The staff do not always feel supported following incidents in which they have been assaulted. There is a lack of connection and communication between the staff and the

manager. This has had a detrimental effect on the children's behaviour.

The staff team is dedicated and resilient. The staff have built good relationships with each child. The children all say that they like and trust the staff. While these relationships build emotional resilience, this is counteracted by the number of incidents at the home.

The manager's review, as well as a list of positive aspects of the home was written during the inspection and cites regular children's meetings. However, records of only two meetings were available at the inspection, only one of which addresses bullying.

Staff who should have previously completed a relevant level 3 qualification at the time of the last inspection have now completed this. There have been no new staff since the last inspection and therefore there has been no sample of the recruitment files.

The wording of the physical intervention records has improved. Debriefings now take place with the staff and children. All the required documentation was accessible during the inspection.

There have been small improvements to the activity programmes for children. The children worked with the staff to plan a fun day to raise money for their holiday. Several of the children were attending Operation Camouflage, which provides team games and outdoor activities during the school holidays. One child has had an opportunity to join a boxing club after she expressed an interest, and an initial visit has taken place. This provides an activity that supports the child's interests outside the home.

The improvements listed above fail to detract from the serious and significant failures to safeguard the children at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/07/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/04/2017	Full	Inadequate
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)(b))	01/09/2018
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 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 (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))	01/09/2018

This is in regard to the cleanliness of the bedrooms and bathrooms.	
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: understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the care in the home: use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)f)(h))	01/10/2018
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; and manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(b)(i)(ii))	01/09/2018
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 in particular regard to recording and monitoring bullying	01/09/2018

incidents to inform a reduction strategy.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes 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))	01/10/2018
This is with particular regard to providing a gate as detailed in the location risk assessment.	

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.

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.

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

Inspector

Deirdra Keating: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018