

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	08/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC063110
Type of inspection	Interim
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
Inspector	Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	08/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Declined in effectiveness. The provider has met some of the requirements set at the last full inspection. Records of physical interventions now include the required information within the requisite timeframe. A new fence now surrounds the grounds and there has been a refurbishment of the shower room. However, there has been no registered manager in post for over 26 weeks. Whilst senior managers have worked hard to recruit to the vacant post, this has only recently been successful and the applicant has yet to start in post. Despite the concerted efforts of the deputy managers, whom staff and external professionals hold in high regard, this vacancy has impacted upon the quality of service provided. Staff and external professionals report that the absence of a consistent registered manager has contributed towards uncertainty and inconsistency. Further, the absence has impacted on the capacity of those acting up to carry out some aspects of their substantive role. The home has met most of the recommendations made at the last inspection. The young people report that staff deal with bullying and they say they feel safe in the home. The bullying log is now in use. There have been efforts made to ensure that staff are aware of the whistleblowing process. Staff are able to articulate clearly what they would do if they had a concern. Senior managers are visible and have been undertaking some supervision and attending staff meetings. This visibility and engagement increases the perception of senior staff as being approachable and in turn, increases the likelihood that staff will raise concerns. Resident's meetings are taking place regularly. The deputy managers have completed a thorough location risk assessment and have been creative in using quizzes with young people to increase their understanding of the risks posed locally. Internal monitoring processes have improved. However, case records still do not clearly record young people's up to date contact arrangements. This imprecision increases the chances of errors occurring. One young person has left the service since the last inspection. This was a planned reunification with her family. One young person has arrived in the home since the last inspection. She reports that this was a quick move but staff in the home helped her to cope with it. She received the young person's guide in advance of	

the move and was able to read it. An impact assessment took place, which considered the potential group dynamics. An individual risk assessment was also completed. This was not sufficiently vigorous. It did not take account of known risks and behaviours in coming to a conclusion regarding the level of risk posed. Internal monitoring processes did not pick this up. This does not support staff to fully understand and mitigate potential risks for young people who are new to the home.

Some elements of the décor are much better than others. The dining area is clean and hospitable. The lounge area is also clean and comfortable. Much needed work has begun to improve the garden at the front and back of the house, although this effort is very much in its infancy. There are cracks in the walls throughout the building that need attention. The variability impacts on the overall homeliness of the premises. In addition, there is limited office space, which means little opportunity for confidential discussions to take place.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. This provides a challenge for the home in terms of ensuring consistency whilst new staff get to know the role. However, managers have not consistently provided staff supervision in line with the frequency set out in organisational policy. This is a concern given the complex needs of the young people, the staffing issues that the management team are dealing with and the number of new staff in post. Further, this does not give the staff the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the issues that affect young people.

Interactions between staff and young people are warm and positive. The young people speak highly of the staff. They report being well looked after and feeling safe. The management team have worked effectively with external professionals. Education professionals report challenges arising from the absence of a permanent manager but speak positively about the engagement that has taken place. The police speak highly of the work done in partnership to safeguard young people who go missing. When young people have gone missing from care, staff have responded in line with protocols.

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to 5 female young people aged between 11 and 17 with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
06/08/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/06/2014	Full	Adequate
03/10/2013	Full	Adequate

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 regard to risk management, the registered provider must ensure that staff: 2 (a) (i) 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.	28/01/2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure both the arrangements for contact and any contact details (such as telephone numbers) are clearly 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)

Ensure that work continues to achieve a domestic rather than institutional environment. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)

Ensure that supervision of staff is carried out in line with the home's own policies. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.2)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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