

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC063110
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual	Clifford James
Registered manager	Paul Plummer
Inspector	Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	08/03/2017
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 last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection, senior managers in the organisation took the decision to close the home for a period of 10 weeks. The home recently began to admit children again. During the period of closure, the staff team received additional training and support. The closure of the home meant children moving on in ways not originally intended. Since the reopening, two of the four children placed in the home have also moved on in an unplanned way. The two remaining children are beginning to form attachments with the staff. More recently, the registered manager has not been working in the home. During this time, a third deputy manager has been seconded from another home to provide additional managerial capacity. The management team receives support from a service manager who is a visible and known presence in the home. Of the eight requirements made at the last inspection, four are met and four are unmet. Consequently, although there is some evidence of initial progress, further improvements are necessary to ensure that children receive a good enough service. Several improvements have been made since the last inspection. The staff now work with education professionals to ensure that children receive education support. One professional spoke of an improvement in the home's approach to working with them since the reopening. The staff have now had physical intervention training. The management team has updated the statement of purpose and submitted this to Ofsted. The staff are receiving supervisions. Residents' meetings now routinely include feedback to the children. The staff request and receive copies of return-from-missing interviews. Recruitment records are now clearer. Although the staff are now receiving supervisions, they have not received annual appraisals. This means that formal opportunities to review performance and training over the year are missed. The risk assessments have improved. However, they still contain gaps in information. For example, a risk assessment relating to self-harm does not consider	

the influence that some children have over others, or the potential impact of such an influence. In addition, fire risk assessments identify risks but are not consistently clear about how staff should manage those risks.

On two occasions since the last inspection, there has been no monthly visit by an independent person. This includes the month leading up to the closure of the home, when the children's behaviour was escalating and external monitoring could have provided additional scrutiny and safeguards.

Medication records are not clear enough and the monitoring of them is not sufficient. In one instance, records suggest that a child did not receive the medication prescribed to them. In another, a child did not receive the full dosage of medication. Monitoring arrangements did not identify either of these concerns and there was no evidence of subsequent management action. The system of managing medication is not robust enough to ensure that children's health needs are fully met.

The staff understand the needs of the children and speak with empathy and insight about them. They are aware of what to do if they are worried about a child's safety or a colleague's conduct. When there are concerns about the way in which staff follow procedures, senior managers take prompt action. When children go missing, the staff act to ensure that return interviews occur. Physical interventions are proportionate and designed to keep children safe.

External professionals are positive about their work with the home. The management team has been robust and proactive in engaging with the local police. This open and professional dialogue is positive. It contributes to ensuring a common understanding and approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable children.

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to five female children aged between 11 and 17, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/04/2016	Full	Requires improvement
08/01/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
06/08/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 within 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 person must ensure— 2(a)(i) 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.	24/03/2017
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered provider must— (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	01/05/2017
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home and ensure that a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23(1)(2)(c))	24/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))	01/05/2017
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))	31/03/2017

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 that 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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