

SC063110

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. The home has an on-site lodge that is used to provide emergency support for children under the care of Suffolk County Council.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home.

The previous registered manager left in December 2024. The current manager started in post in February 2025 following a period of managing in an interim capacity. The manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 11 August 2025

Date of last inspection: 7 May 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Staff have on occasion inappropriately restrained children. On one occasion, a member of staff pulled a child by their limbs across the floor. Another member of staff, and another child, witnessed this incident. This second member of staff did not intervene in the incident to safeguard the child, and an investigation found that they wrote a false and misleading record of what happened.

Staff have not always quickly informed managers of safeguarding concerns or when children have made allegations against staff. This has undermined the manager's ability to make appropriate safeguarding decisions and keep children safe.

Staffing levels in the home have not always been adequate to meet the children's complex needs. On one occasion, a member of staff did not physically intervene to stop a child, who immediately prior had shared intent to take an overdose, taking paracetamol tablets. The staff said they did not feel able to do so while working on their own with the child.

On one occasion, staff did not seek medical advice for a child who was vomiting. This was despite concern that this child may have taken drugs and/or consumed alcohol.

Staff have not always ensured that they have followed the agreed deployment plan for agency staff and have left agency staff to work alone with children. On one occasion, a child made an allegation during the time that agency members of staff were supporting them, and this allegation was not immediately raised with managers.

The acting manager identified concern about a potential child moving into the home and shared this with senior leaders. These concerns were based on the child's risks and the potential impact on other children already living in the home. This child was moved into the home by senior leaders despite the acting manager not agreeing with this decision. There have since been serious concerns in relation to sexual activity between these two children in the home, sexualised behaviour in the communal areas of the home and the barricading of bedroom doors.

One child moved out of the home in a planned and positive way. Staff supported this child to build relationships with the staff and children from their new home. They

enjoyed activities with the children and time spent with the new staff prior to the move.

Staff have supported one child to gain a place on a college course. Staff have helped this child to make progress, and there has been an overall decrease in risks for this child.

Two children currently have part-time jobs, which they are managing successfully and independently. Another child who has now moved out also maintained a job throughout their time in the home.

Managers have been proactive at involving other professionals to support the care planning and ways of working for children. Decisions around children's care are not made in isolation, and professionals are kept up to date.

Leaders and managers were aware of the shortfalls prior to the inspection. They have begun to take steps to improve the care offered to children. This includes the temporary deployment of an experienced manager from the service, and the plan to temporarily close the emergency provision at the home until the necessary improvements have been made.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/07/2024	Full	Good
05/07/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2022	Full	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, The 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(v)(vi)(vii) (b)) In particular, ensure that: when children raise safeguarding concerns, these are reported to managers without delay;	8 September 2025

records in the home are accurate and truthful; staff seek medical advice for children, when necessary; and staff take effective action to prevent children from harming themselves. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	8 September 2025
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— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that children are only admitted to the home if it has been assessed by the manager of the home that staff are able to meet the child's needs alongside the needs of the current children.	8 August 2025

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—

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)(h))

In particular, ensure that:

there are adequate staff on shift at any time to meet children's needs and to allow staff to effectively intervene when necessary for children's safety;

staff are aware of the expectation around the deployment of agency members of staff, and

managers review all records in a timely way, including follow up reviews for records when necessary.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

8 August 2025

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC063110

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Registered provider address: Babergh District Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Glynn Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

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