

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 four children aged from eight to 17. The home also has an off-site bed which is used as an emergency placement for children under the care of Suffolk County Council.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection date: 16 February 2022

Date of last inspection: 21 September 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

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 this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has improved effectiveness.

The manager has addressed all four of the requirements that were raised at the last inspection and two of the four recommendations. Two recommendations are restated.

Since the last inspection, two children have left the home and two children have moved into the home. The home has started to provide an emergency placement bed at a separate location in the county as part of their registered provision.

The frequency of incidents of children going missing from the home or receiving sanctions as a consequence of negative behaviour has significantly reduced. Managers are working with staff to improve how sanctions are implemented so that they are meaningful and proportionate. However, further work is needed to develop this with staff. When physical interventions are required, they are used only as a last resort. Children are involved in discussions to share their views after incidents of restraint.

Since the last inspection, some improvements have been made to the decoration and fixtures of the home. However, some carpets, soft furnishings and kitchen drawer fronts are still in need of replacement. This has a negative impact on the homely feel of the environment and does not promote children's sense of well-being. The garden area is large but rarely used by children. The lawn area is in poor condition, there is only limited play equipment available and the vegetable plots are overgrown.

Staff encourage and help children who are planning to move on to learn skills for independence and to prepare emotionally for this change. For one child, this work was crucial in helping them settle during a challenging period in their life. They are now enjoying semi-independent living. Staff worked with care staff at the new provision during the weeks following the move to give further guidance. This child remains in regular contact with staff, meeting them for coffee and social events. Children are supported to maintain friendships and relationships outside of the home.

Managers have improved systems to consider children's needs before they move into the home. The process is now much more rigorous and considers the views of senior staff. Staff said that this change has been essential in ensuring that children's needs can be met and reducing the risk of a negative impact on other children already living at the home. Children and staff all said that the home is now much more settled.

The manager has put in place a system to consider the use of the emergency bed. Social work staff who understand the home's statement of purpose assess the needs of any child using the emergency bed. When the bed is needed, on-call staff can activate this at short notice and ensure that the child's urgent needs are met. If a child needs to stay at the emergency provision for longer, staff begin to plan for and meet emerging needs such as attending school and buying clothes.

Children are making good progress with attending education, working towards achieving qualifications and career planning. Staff are supporting and encouraging one child who has not attended school for a long time to start at a new education provision. The child said that this is very important to them and helping them to build their confidence.

Staff meet children's health needs well, encouraging healthy eating and healthy living, including regular exercise. Staff have worked closely with one child to encourage them to engage with health professionals for the first time and overcome their anxiety associated with this. Records detail contact with health professionals for each child, demonstrating how staff proactively follow up health concerns and seek advice from relevant professionals.

Children now benefit from having greater involvement in the running of the home. Their views are actively encouraged and valued by managers. This includes involvement in weekly planning of activities, and staff actively encourage children to follow their hobbies and interests. For the first time, children can keep pets at the home. This is very important for one child's well-being. The manager included the children when developing new policies, with children providing a review. One child is advising managers on the development of a new home for the provider, which makes the child feel valued, empowered and able to make a positive contribution.

Managers have begun to work with staff to enhance the therapeutic care given to children who have experienced trauma in their lives. Experienced senior staff are providing training and supervision sessions with staff to reflect on how incidents are managed and recorded.

Children say that they like living at the home and feel safe. They know who to speak to when they have concerns. Improvements have been made to identify and manage the risk of bullying behaviours. Staff are vigilant when new children move into the home and they monitor the dynamics between children as they settle.

Children and staff all said that the new and consistent management team has brought positive changes and stability. The home has begun to move forward in meeting children's holistic needs. Children are making progress from their starting points. Staff said that they feel motivated and confident that they can make a difference to children's well-being.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/08/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. Specifically, replace the stained carpets upstairs, the worn armchairs in the activity room and complete maintenance work in the garden area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Information about this inspection

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.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Suffolk County Council

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

Responsible individual: Robina Khan

Registered manager: Tobias Hall

Inspector

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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