

SC063110

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home offers care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home has an on-site lodge that is used as an emergency placement for children under the care of Suffolk County Council. Two children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. One child was living in the lodge.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 29 January 2024. He holds a relevant level 5 qualification.

Inspection date: 22 October 2024

This monitoring visit

This visit was undertaken to address specific concerns and information received by Ofsted. No serious or widespread concerns were identified.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the main home and one child was living in the on-site lodge. The inspector saw and spoke to one child. One child was out with friends for the full day. The inspector spoke to this child on the phone. Another child was on holiday with their family.

One child has made significant progress in a short space of time since living at the home. Staff have acted quickly and appropriately when the child has been at significant risk of harm from running into oncoming traffic. Managers have worked closely with health professionals to change the timing of this child's medication to help them to settle better at a time of day that is known to be difficult for the child. Staff have quickly got to know the child and developed strategies to enable them to have more freedom, balanced with the need to keep them safe. This has had a

direct impact. Since this limited free time has been introduced, there have been no incidents of the child running out into the road.

Staff have had to hold children to keep them safe. When staff have held children, these holds have been necessary and proportionate and effective at keeping the child safe. Management reviews of physical intervention records are analytical. They consider patterns and trends and any steps that can be taken to prevent the need for these interventions in the future. However, the records do not include staff debriefs. This does not enable managers to review any learning or support needs for staff following an incident.

There is low staff turnover. Children say that staff know them and that they are cared for by consistent staff. External professionals say that their children have good relationships with staff. Staff say that they are well supported by managers and are given the time to reflect and regroup after challenging incidents.

Children said that they are happy living at the home. They enjoy a wide range of activities, including trips to theme parks, the cinema and skating. Children are encouraged to develop hobbies. One child attended the local army cadets. Another child developed a keen interest in professional boxing and has since secured a job at the local boxing club. The staff work with the boxing coach to support the child at times of stress for them.

Children regularly go missing from the home. When children have left the home without permission or have not returned after being out, staff have spent prolonged periods of time searching for them. Plans for children who regularly go missing are clear, specific and agreed with the local authority and police. Children are welcomed back home after being missing. However, they are not always offered return home interviews. When these interviews have taken place, it has often been several weeks after the incident. This does not help the staff to use the information gathered to develop plans to prevent recurrence and to keep the child safe during periods of being missing.

One child has experienced an increase in safeguarding concerns and risks in the community. The staff work closely with the local authority and the relevant safeguarding teams to share information and develop safety plans around this child. The staff challenged the local authority when they did not feel that they could keep the child safe. Together with the local authority, the staff supported the child to spend time away from the home with family and carers. This was effective at reducing the immediate risk for this child.

Staff receive training on self-harm and ligature risks. One child wrapped a string of lights around their neck and staff did not take immediate action to use the ligature knives provided. The string was not tight and the child was not at risk of immediate harm. However, the police assisted in removing the lights from around the child's neck. The police officer involved in the incident did not feel that staff were confident

to use the ligature knives. Before this visit, staff had already been booked to have further ligature training, with a focus on using the ligature cutters. This training has not yet taken place.

The home uses agency staff to support children. Generally, there is safe recruitment of agency staff. However, on one occasion, the acting manager allowed an agency member of staff to continue working in the home without the relevant photo identification. This did not ensure that staff member's suitability.

Children do not always have free access to some areas of the home, such as the pantry cupboard and the laundry room. One child said that this does not make the house feel homely. Restrictions on access to areas of the home are not individually assessed and regularly reviewed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/07/2024	Full	Good
05/07/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2022	Full	Good
16/02/2022	Interim	Improved 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, 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 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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	17 December 2024
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 31 (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	17 December 2024
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and	17 December 2024

any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—

is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;

is necessary and proportionate;

is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and

allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Staff should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. In particular, ensure that records of staff debriefs are kept to enable effective review of practice and areas of learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to review concerns raised to Ofsted.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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: Wayne Jordan

Inspector

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

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