

SC063110

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Full 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 with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. Parents and professionals are pleased with the care that staff are providing to their children. Staff are experienced and confident. Staff encourage children's hobbies and interests. Small pets are welcomed by staff. As a result, children's experience of care is improved by living at this home.

Three children have moved out and three children have moved in since the last inspection. Thorough suitability and matching decisions are made before a new child moves in. The introduction of new children has, at times, affected the dynamics in the home. This has resulted in an increase in incidents and children feeling unsettled. However, staff responded effectively to these incidents to ensure that all children were kept safe.

Staff encourage children to be independent. Children are responsible for their bedrooms and laundry. Staff are proactive in preparing older children for moving on from the home. Independence plans are introduced to ensure that children are confident with household chores and using public transport, and can access part-time employment. Therefore, they are prepared for adulthood.

Children's progress in education is mixed. Some children who did not attend school before they moved to the home are now attending school. One child's recent GCSE results meant that they were offered a choice of college placements to study performing arts. This has increased the child's sense of confidence and self-esteem. For another child, who is currently not attending school or engaging in any education, staff are persistent in their attempts to secure a school place for the child. However, differences in opinion of the school's location have led to a prolonged period in which the child has not attended education. Therefore, this child has made little educational progress.

Children receive high levels of emotional and practical support from staff to help them develop and maintain relationships with their families and friends. Staff advocate for the children and work proactively with parents and professionals to plan visits. For a few children, detailed planning has meant that successful overnight stays have progressed to returning to live with family members. As a result of staff's interventions, children's relationships with their friends and families flourish.

There have been considerable improvements to the exterior and interior of the home since the last inspection. However, some carpets and walls require attention due to damage caused from make-up and nail varnish.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Safer recruitment processes for new and agency staff are comprehensively carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Two of the children, who have lived at the home for the longest periods, have made good progress in becoming safer. The work that staff do with children has helped children to make safer choices because they have become more aware of the risk they could face.

Risk assessments are detailed and contain presenting risks. When incidents occur, staff review risk assessments and develop safety plans that provide clear strategies for managing the risks. This helps staff to feel confident in their approach and to be consistent in their responses.

Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks. This includes gaining confidence to have time out of the home without staff supervision. Consistent boundaries implemented by staff help children to become more self-aware. As a result, children are trusted to use public transport independently and meet with friends unsupervised.

Physical intervention is used appropriately to keep children safe. Staff have received the required training and interventions are recorded thoroughly. Children's views are recorded, and staff debriefs have taken place. However, on four occasions, the manager has failed to ensure that the debriefs and oversight of the restraint record were completed within the required time frame. This delay in oversight has meant that emerging concerns or issues relating to the restraint were not responded to promptly.

On occasions, staff have missed opportunities to have conversations with children about unsafe behaviour. Staff have not ensured that children understand consequences to actions, such as starting fires or refusing to leave the home when the fire alarm goes off. At the time of the inspection, the manager had made a referral to the fire setter intervention scheme. However, delays in response to unsafe behaviours have potentially increased the risk of harm to children.

There have been incidents of children going missing from the home. Staff have responded in line with individual missing-from-care protocols to help find and return the child to the home as soon as possible. For one child, although the manager requested return-home interviews, there are seven records that fail to show if these interviews took place. Therefore, the manager is unable to respond to information provided by the child during the interview to reduce further incidents of the child going missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced in his role. He leads a team of dedicated managers and competent youth support practitioners. The managers and staff have established good working relationships with external professionals, who are positive about the communication and working relationship with them. Social

workers receive regular updates about their children's progress. Children benefit from knowing that everyone is working together to meet their needs.

Managers have a visible presence at the home, which enables them to readily monitor staff practice. Good monitoring systems help to ensure that children's records are up to date.

Staff said that they feel supported by the managers. In addition to the regular practice-related supervision sessions, all managers and staff receive monthly clinical group supervisions with a clinical psychologist. Staff benefit from oversight and guidance that supports them in their roles.

Staff access a broad training package. However, only two staff have received county lines and gang affiliation training. Several staff have failed to refresh some of the home's mandatory training. Therefore, not all staff are equipped with the necessary skills to respond to the child's needs.

The manager has reviewed the use of the home's emergency bed provision. Complications relating to the provision's location away from the home and difficulties in recruiting staff placed additional demand on the staff. As a result, the home no longer provides emergency placements for children.

On occasions, the manager has failed to notify Ofsted of serious incidents. Such delays affect Ofsted's ability to have effective oversight of the home.

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, 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) In particular, ensure that there is a written record of independent return-home interviews with each child.	28 October 2022
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)) In particular, ensure that staff's training is updated, and that staff have access to county lines and gang affiliation awareness training.	25 November 2022
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—	30 September 2022

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children and staff involved in a restraint are spoken to within the required time frame.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) In particular, the registered person must notify HMCI without delay.	30 September 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, replace the stained carpets and repair damage to the upstairs landing and bedrooms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children feel safe and are safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home. In particular, have discussions with children about fire risks and the importance of evacuations. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

Information about this 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 address: Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich Suffolk
IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Robina Khan

Registered manager: Tobias Hall

Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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