

Norfolk Review of Unregulated Alternative Provision

Name of Provider	Edfords Care Farm
Address	Upper Wood Farm South, Browns Lane, Mautby, Great Yarmouth NR29 3JQ
Website	https://www.edfordscarefarm.co.uk/
Centre lead	Chris Howes
Date	- On site visit Monday December 8th, 2025 - Follow up visit Tuesday December 16th, 2025¹ - QA update site visit Thursday March 12th, 2026 - Desktop Update Thursday 30th April 2026
Review carried out by	- Sonia Walker, Senior Adviser, SEN and AP Strategy and Sufficiency - Karl Plane, Senior Transitional Education Officer (December 2025) - Natalie Cunliffe, QA Officer (March 2026)

Review purpose and expected outcomes:

- not a mini-Ofsted nor an inspection; it is to assess the effectiveness of the provision for all Norfolk pupils

¹ Where relevant, notes have been added as **16/12** and the RAG-rating updated.

- to assess the effectiveness of the institution in improving outcomes for looked after children and/or for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- to ensure ongoing quality of alternative provision for Norfolk learners
- to provide a county-wide picture of the alternative provision for Norfolk LAC/SEN pupils
- to enable key issues which arise to be addressed with support and guidance.
- ultimately, to result in the sharing of best practice between schools to support the [Flourish - Norfolk County Council](#) ambition
- to use information acquired to maintain an up-to-date directory of AP in Norfolk

The review gathered evidence from the following:

- Analysis of data provided by the institution
- Scrutiny of pupils' work/folders
- Scrutiny of the provider's website
- Companies House
- Discussions with senior leaders and proprietor representatives
- Consideration of commissioners' views

Context

- Edfords Care Farm is situated in the village of Mautby near Great Yarmouth.
- It is a working organic farm with a butchery on site.
- Young people learn hands-on farming skills and may complete AQA Awards. Leaders have designed AQA Awards to suit the setting, such as 'Raising organic pigs for pork'.
- This QA visit did not involve session observations or discussions with young people as no children were on site.
- The QA visit was held at short notice and so the proprietor did not complete the blue 'Provider response' columns below.
- An initial visit took place on December 8th, 2025, with a follow-up on December 16th.
- A QA update visit took place on March 12th, 2026. All relevant notes are annotated **MAR26** in the tables below.

Number of Norfolk pupils attending the setting by year group – *updated March 2026*

YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	5	1	4	20

Commissioners 2025-2026

01 Staffing and safer recruitment

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Name(s) and role(s) of centre lead(s) . Are leaders suitably qualified?	Please provide as a separate document	Chris Howes and Louise Bishop Howes are the proprietors.	n/a
Who holds the leaders to account? E.g., is there a board of trustees?	Please provide detail	Leaders describe a Board of Directors who meet 6-monthly and focus on the not-for-profit aspect of the farm (rather than the AP). They report that handwritten notes are taken but these were not available to view. It is recommended that minutes of Directors' meetings be scanned and saved. MAR26 Leaders will be using Gemini moving forward to record these meetings – not yet in place. APRIL26 Copy of notes from meeting received and checked by NC.	APRIL 2026
Which leaders are trained in safer recruitment ?	Please provide detail including copies of up-to-date certificates	CH 12/25 and JS 09/25 are trained, certificates seen. JS leaves in January 2026 and so a 2 nd colleague will need to be trained. This RAG-rating will revert to amber once there is only CH on staff who is trained.	
Staff list with qualifications	Please provide as a separate document	Leaders do not seek specific qualifications when recruiting.	N/A

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Ratio of staff per pupil (during a session)	E.g., 1:4	Not seen during this visit; leaders confirm that the ratio is usually 3-1.	N/A
Do ALL staff files have application forms which include 1. personal details (current and former names, current address and national insurance number) 2. details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving 3. full employment history 4. qualifications 5. details of referees 6. a statement of personal qualities and experience	Yes/No/in progress	GR CV seen – gap evident and CH confirmed he had the conversation, but this wasn't noted in writing. 16/12 - subsequently a 'gaps in employment assessment' was created. This colleague had been a student at university. The colleague provided email evidence of this. 3 members of education team – and 1 farm worker (1 other works Saturday-Monday, when there are no children). JS applied via Indeed – application had not been downloaded – done on the day of the review. SL – not currently employed – was being supervised in the AP – worked at East Coast College. DM Farm Manager (on site every day) – applied via Indeed – downloaded on the day. Leaders must ensure that appropriate application forms or CVs are uploaded and any gaps explored (with evidence) for future recruits.	
Do ALL staff files have a self-declaration of any criminal record or	Yes/No/in progress	None available – template sent.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
information which may make them unsuitable to work with children?		16/12 GR/LBH/CH/DM/AD seen MAR26 Seen for 3 new staff.	
Do ALL staff files have evidence of right to work in the UK ? Do ALL staff files have photocopies of 2 identity checks (with a photograph) - see How to prove and verify someone's identity - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Yes/No/in progress/N/A	GR/JS/SL/DM/LBH seen MAR26 Seen for 3 new staff.	
Do ALL staff files have at least 2 references , including 1 from the current or most recent employer?	Yes/No/in progress	GR/SL seen JS – only 1 seen (leaving in January 2026) DM only 1 seen – was previously self-employed. Leaders must seek a second reference (this may be a character reference is the colleague was previously self-employed) and where not possible, put a risk assessment in place. See p43 of the Edfords safeguarding policy. 16/12 – DM risk assessment created. Seen. JS leaving in a few days, so this was not pursued. Minimum of 2 references to be sought for all future appointments. MAR26	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		Seen for 3 new staff.	
Do any staff files have a risk assessment ? (E.g., if a colleague has declared a conviction such as a driving offence, which may not affect their suitability to work with children)	Please answer Yes or No or N/A – do not provide personal details	16/12 as above – seen for DM.	
Do ALL staff files have interview notes which include a safeguarding question?	Yes/No/in progress	GR seen. The notes for this interview had been typed up retrospectively. It was recommended that names and roles of interviewers be included, and this was completed on 8/12/25. No interview notes for either JS/DM. This guidance follows KCSIE paragraphs 226-228; 331. 16/12 agreed that interview notes would be collated moving forward and options for this discussed. To remain amber until evidence seen for new recruits ready for the spring term. MAR26 Seen for 3 new staff.	MAR26
Do ALL staff files have photocopies of qualifications ?	Yes/No/some/in progress/N/A	Leaders report that they do not require staff to hold formal qualifications to work at Edfords. Training certificates were seen for courses completed while employed at Edfords.	
Is there a staff tracker or single central record which includes name and address of employee/volunteer a. Date employment started	Yes/No/in progress DO NOT EMAIL THIS DOCUMENT – IT CAN BE VIEWED ON SCREEN OR ON SITE	Seen – with gaps which need addressing as a priority.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
b. Date identity checks carried out and by whom c. Date DBS checked and by whom d. Risk assessment in place yes/no e. Right to work in the UK checks – when and by whom f. Qualifications check – when and by whom g. Prohibition order checks- when and by whom (for those in 'teaching activity')		16/12 – updated; seen. This must be maintained moving forward with new recruits.	
Have all staff had an ENHANCED DBS check which has been undertaken by your setting (i.e. not a certificate from a previous check)	Yes/No/in progress	1 colleague did not have a completed DBS; CH confirms that this colleague was always supervised – and no longer works for the farm. NCC expectations in Children's Services match those in KCSIE Thus, where an individual begins work before the DBS is available, they must be supervised – and a separate <i>children's barred list check</i> completed (paragraph 252). 16/12 as per the SCR – all current staff have a DBS in place. This must be maintained moving forward. Evidence seen of the DBS check for the colleague working with adults to say they had passed the barred list check (Stage 3) – but not yet Stage 5. MAR26 Seen for 3 new staff.	
Is there a central log of all staff training/professional development?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Do staff undergo performance reviews or appraisal?	Please describe	Leaders report that staff supervisions occur every 3 months – but the current education team started in September 2025 and due to staff losses, this has not yet taken place. MAR26 No change as the team members are new.	TBC – QA update
Are staff offered opportunities to debrief following a challenging session/at the end of each day/week?	Please describe	Seen.	
Is there a staff code of conduct ? Does it include clear expectations and information on acceptable use of technologies, relationships and communications between children/parents/carers and staff/volunteers, including the use of social media, rules on staff/volunteer contact with children by phone or messaging services, a commitment that under no circumstances should any staff/volunteer inflict physical or psychological harm on a child?	Yes/No/in progress	Updated DEC25; seen.	

02 Safeguarding

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Is the provider a member of the Safer Programme page Norfolk	Yes/No/in progress	Confirmed.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Safeguarding Children Partnership PWWC (norfolkscp.org.uk)			
Is there an up-to-date safeguarding policy? Is it available on the website?	Yes/No/in progress	16/12 – the policy is complete but not yet on the website due to a change in website designer. CH confirms that this will be done by the new year. MAR26 Safeguarding policy Children 2025.docx	MAR26
Is the policy adapted from the unregulated AP model policy available via the Safer Programme?	Yes/No/in progress	Updated DEC25.	
Does the policy have detail around contacting schools/other commissioners without delay , in case of a concern?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy reference Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) [KCSIE]?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen. The policy names the Office Manager who is leaving in January 2026 and will need updating after this date. MAR26 Policy updated (seen).	
Are staff required to read Part One of KCSIE and sign to say they have done so?	Yes/No/in progress	GR seen but not dated. JS seen CH/LBH not seen. 16/12 - Seen for all current staff. New staff must complete this during their induction period – and all staff to repeat this activity every September (when KCSIE is updated).	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		MAR26 Seen for 3 new staff.	
Does the policy reference Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) ?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy include detail on how to contact the Duty Desk (LADO triage service) if there is a concern that an adult working with a child/children may have caused them harm? The telephone number to include is 01603 307797	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy include a sample safeguarding record form? Does the safeguarding record form include sections on who at the commissioning school/local authority was contacted, how and when?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
How and where are safeguarding records stored securely?	Please provide detail	Records are stored electronically but there are none on record currently. The setting uses the model form. GR and JS have access to the records. 16/12 – query raised following feedback which stated <i>When there has been a SG issue, he has let us know (only once)</i> . This dated from 2023, and the team has changed since then. CH confirms that the recording form will be used moving forward and stored securely (to be checked at the next update).	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Do behaviour incident record forms include sections on who at the commissioning school/local authority was contacted, how and when?	Yes/No/in progress	As above.	
If the setting works with electively home-educated children , does the policy have clear detail on contacting the Services to Home Educators - Norfolk County Council in the case of a safeguarding concern?	Yes/No/in progress/the setting does not work with home-educated children	N/A	N/A
Does the policy state that if the placement is under the remit of the Transitional Education Service or Virtual school for looked after and previously looked after children - Norfolk County Council concerns will be addressed to the relevant adviser/key contact?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy include information on the Prevent Duty and how to make a referral if needed?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy have contact information for Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) Norfolk County Council Norfolk Community Directory and how/when to make a referral?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Who are the safeguarding leads and what training have they undertaken?	Please provide detail Please provide evidence of certificates	Online training records seen (VitalSkills). GR 09/25 JS 03/24 LBH 09/25 CH 12/25 DM 02/24	MAY26

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		It is recommended that the 2 training places included in the Safer Programme membership be used for the safeguarding lead – these will be the Introduction to Safeguarding and then, the Designated Safeguarding Person training. Next available date face to face is 26/2/2026 – CH has emailed the Safer Programme to book. MAR26 LBH was unable to attend the above training. The new Office Manager is taking over this role and is booked on to the Introduction training on 28/04/26 and then DSP on 14/05/26. APRIL26 Introduction to safeguarding certificate seen for EC – completed 28/04/2026 MAY 26 – DSP course complete for EC and certificate seen by NC. 14.5.2026.	
Have ALL staff undergone safeguarding training ? Which organisation delivers the training?	Yes/No/in progress Please provide evidence of certificates	As above. In addition, new staff must be trained before being permitted to work with young people.	
Does the provider have a central log of all the Designated Safeguarding Leads at each commissioning school?	Yes/No/In progress	Seen.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Is attendance reported back to the commissioner within 30 minutes of a child's planned arrival time?	Yes/No – please provide detail if the answer is No	The Edfords SLA states, <i>Edfords Care Farm will email student attendance daily</i>. This must be 'within 30 minutes of the planned arrival time'. This is an NCC safeguarding expectation. The referral form states, <i>Attendance confirmation will be sent via email after each day a child attends</i> – this should be changed as above. 16/12 updated to state that attendance will be reported back by 10.30am (arrival time is 10am). 8 commissioners confirmed that attendance is reported within 30 minutes.	
Do learners have a behaviour contract /code of conduct?	Please provide detail	Student induction pack seen – this includes expectations on behaviour. Code of conduct seen. Anti-bullying policy seen – this would benefit from a statement such as 'in all cases of bullying, the commissioning parties for both perpetrator and victim will be notified without delay. A similar statement is advised in the Behaviour policy.	
Is any form of physical intervention used at the setting? If so, how and when are staff trained and is there a suitable policy in place?	Yes/No – Please provide detail. Please send copies of certificates or have available to view on site.	RPI is not used with children. Leaders described how 7 staff had been trained in Positive Management of Violence and Aggression to be able to meet the needs of a 21-year-old	N/A

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		who attended previously. The trainer is Warren Stanton.	
Do learners use technology and/or have access to the internet while at the provision? If so, what filtering systems are in place?	N/A or Please provide detail	1 pupil (S19) has occasional use of a laptop, but this is always supervised. Acceptable Usage Agreement seen.	
Is there a photograph consent policy/form?	Please provide detail	Seen in the induction pack and referral form.	
If there are post-16 or adults also learning on site at the setting, how is safeguarding for school-age young people ensured?	Please provide detail	Discussed; leaders are reviewing having vulnerable adults on site at the same time as school-age children. See below re a 21-year-old Suffolk adult who attends the setting. Any post-16 on site would be supported at least 1-1. They would all have an EHCP. The farm is 84 acres which facilitates keeping post-16 and children apart. 18/12 Any future NCC placements will require reassurance around the presence of post-16 (not adults) on site and measures taken to ensure that all attendees are safeguarded.	
Are signing in procedures appropriate?	To be completed by the LA Officer	No safeguarding or fire information was provided to the LA Officers, and this is recommended. MAR26 LA Officers were required to sign in. Safeguarding information is on the reverse of the visitor's badge and fire	MAR26

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		exit, and assembly information is clearly displayed.	
Is the site secure ?	To be completed by the LA Officer	Edfords is a working Farm and so it would not be possible to secure the site. Risk assessments for the site and pupils address all potential dangers re absconding, for example. The public access the butchery at the front of the site and could wander into the farm area. Staffing ratios should minimise risk; all staff should be reminded to always challenge unfamiliar faces.	

03 Health and safety

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Is there an up-to-date health and safety policy ? Is the policy available on the website ?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen.	
Does the policy have detail around contacting schools/commissioners without delay , in case of a concern/first aid incident/accident?	Yes/No/in progress	P4.	
What training is in place for health and safety for all staff?	Please provide detail/certificates	Leaders report that this is delivered in-house as part of staff induction. 16/12 - certificates seen GR/LBH/CH COSHH Awareness certificate seen 12/25 GR/LBH/CH Infection, Prevention and Control Awareness 12/25	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		GR Health, safety and welfare for workers 12/25 GR/LBH Manual Handling 12/25 LBH/CH Legionella Awareness 12/25 LBH/CH Risk Assessment Awareness 12/25 CH Sharps Safety Awareness 12/25 CH Work equipment awareness 12/25 All pupils also complete H&S training. CH is currently completing IOSH training for executives and directors.	
How many staff have received First Aid training ?	Please provide detail, including certificates	JS/LBH/CH/DM Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work 08/24 (valid 3 years) – certificates seen.	
Is there a dedicated First Aid record book/log? How are First Aid incidents reported back to commissioners and parent carers?	Please provide detail	Accident book seen. Commissioners are contacted after an incident.	
Are all First Aid kits on site up to date? Who checks these?	Please provide detail	First Aid kits seen contained some out-of-date items and these should be removed and replaced. 16/12 – out of date items have been removed. Seen.	
Which organisation carries out fire safety checks?	Please provide detail, including certificates	Fire risk assessment seen (updated NOV25). Prevent Fire contacted to re-send the certificate – not yet available. 16/12 - Fire extinguishers show that the review date is 12/25 and so this needs updating within 15 days. CH to seek an alternative as a priority.	MAR26

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		18/12 email assurance received that fire extinguishers will be replaced on 30/12/25. MAR26 Certificate and extinguishers seen, expiry date 30/12/26.	
Is there a fire evacuation log?	Yes/No	Fire assembly point sign needs replacing. 16/12 – done. Fire drill log book and electronic record seen.	
Is there up to date Employers Liability insurance?	Please provide detail, including certificates	Seen; expires October 2026.	
Is there up to date Public Liability insurance?	Please provide detail, including certificates	Seen; expires October 2026.	
If a child needs to bring in medication , can it be stored securely ? Is there a suitable medication log ?	Please provide detail	Medication would be stored in the Office Manager's desk and the office door locked if no adult is present. Medication log seen.	
Is there a policy which says that any medication for children should be brought in in its original packing with the dosage sticker visible?	Yes/no – please provide detail	Seen.	
Do all pupils have an individual risk assessment ?	Yes/no/only some The commissioner completes our risk assessment the commissioner provides us with their own risk assessment	Samples seen. The SLA requires commissioners to carry out their own risk assessments. There is also an Edfords specific risk assessment form (seen).	
Does each activity have a suitable risk assessment ?	Yes/no/N/A Please provide samples	18/12 Risk assessments received. There are some concerns around identified levels of risk – e.g. the use	MAR26

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		of power tools and risk of amputation is deemed medium. This raises questions such as, why would children be using power tools at all, and what constitutes high risk if not amputation? RAs should be reviewed ahead of the next review (within 3 months). MAR26 Power tools may be used for building animal accommodation, such as chicken houses. All power tools are cordless and leaders state this means there is less risk of electrocution. All use of power tools is supervised and does not happen very often. Risk assessments have been updated. CH intends to review these within the coming months.	
Are there measures in place for good hygiene practice, e.g., for hand and respiratory hygiene?	Please provide detail	Seen. Toilets seen on the day of the review were appropriate to the environment.	
If the provision involves contact with animals/machinery/equipment , what safety measures/training are in place?	Please provide detail	As above. MAR26 As above.	MAR26

04 Provision

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Is the proprietor familiar with Alternative provision - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Yes/No/in progress	Leaders confirm they are familiar with this.	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
Is the proprietor familiar with the regulations for the number of hours and days that a pupil may attend? Independent school registration - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Does the proprietor confirm that no pupil attends more than 2 full days (or 4 half days) per week?	Yes/No/unsure– we need advice on this	Confirmed.	
Is provision made for pupils entitled to free school meals ?	Yes/no/unsure/the pupil(s) does/do not attend over lunchtime/the school provides a packed lunch/vouchers to the family	Seen in the pupil induction pack and referral form.	
How and when is progress reported back to commissioners? Is there a final report?	Please provide detail	Reports are sent half-termly. Samples seen with evidence of AQA Awards being completed.	
What does the provision cost ?	Please provide detail	£135-300 per day depending on need.	
Is the provision listed in the Norfolk County Council Directory of Unregulated Alternative Provision?	Yes/No If No – please state why not	Confirmed in September 2025.	
Is the centre lead familiar with questions an Ofsted inspector may ask during a school inspection , as the inspector may telephone or visit the AP setting?	Yes – we have experience of this No	Discussed. The setting is aware of inspections but hasn't been contacted yet.	
What are the key aims of the provision?	Please provide detail	Edfords Care Farm Statement of Purpose seen. In summary: • Provide vocational, farm-based learning for students unable to access conventional classrooms. • Support social, emotional, and cognitive development through	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		purposeful tasks and enterprise education. • Build confidence and improve relationships with learning to re-engage students with education. • Offer tailored outcomes, including AQA Awards, to help students progress toward future goals.	
Which age ranges can access the provision? Is there a post-16 offer ?	Please provide detail	Y7-11. There is currently a 21-year-old from Suffolk who is supported 1-1. There have been post-16 EOTAS pupils (placed by NCC). Risk assessments are completed, and all post-16 have either 1-1 or 2-1 support.	
Describe a typical session/programme (e.g., if a half-term etc.)	Please provide detail	See Appendix 1.	
Is the provision able to support children with special education needs ?	Please provide detail	All education staff must complete ADHD, Autism, Child Mental Health, COSHH, Data Protection/GDPR, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Extremism and Prevent training via the online provider. In addition, some staff complete Infection Prevention and Control; Managing behaviour that challenges, and Manual handling.	
Are taster/trial sessions possible? If so, is there a cost?	Please provide detail	Leaders ask that all children interested visit the farm, as the environment is not appropriate for everyone. One	

Checklist	Provider response	Evidence seen?	RAG
		school places children without pre-placement visits. This practice should be discouraged.	
Does the provider insist on a pre-placement visit check by the commissioner?	Please provide detail	As above. The setting advises that all commissioning parties visit the site ahead of placement – seen in the referral form.	
Has the provider cross-checked their referral/admissions form with template 02 at Unregulated alternative provision templates - Schools (norfolk.gov.uk) to identify any potential gaps?	Yes/No/in progress	Seen and discussed; planned outcomes have been added.	
Are any baseline assessments carried out?	Yes/No If Yes – Please provide detail	N/A Reports talk about the progression a child makes but these are not measured against a baseline.	N/A
Are parent carers involved in commissioning? Do they visit and/or receive copies of progress reports?	Please provide detail	Parent carers receive copies of reports.	
Is the provision available to electively home-educated children ? If so, how many attend?	Yes/No/ Please provide detail	N/A	N/A
Are appropriate planned outcomes/targets agreed pre-placement for each child?	Yes/No/ Please provide detail	Discussed and added to the referral form.	
Does the provision support reintegration into school? How is transition supported?	Please provide detail	Leaders confirm this and are keen to re-engage young people with education. They estimate that 1 in 5 leavers go on to study agricultural courses post-16.	
Do learners work towards any qualifications ?	Please provide detail	AQA Awards.	
Is transport provided?	Yes/No	N/A	N/A

Site visit, commissioner and learner feedback

DEC25

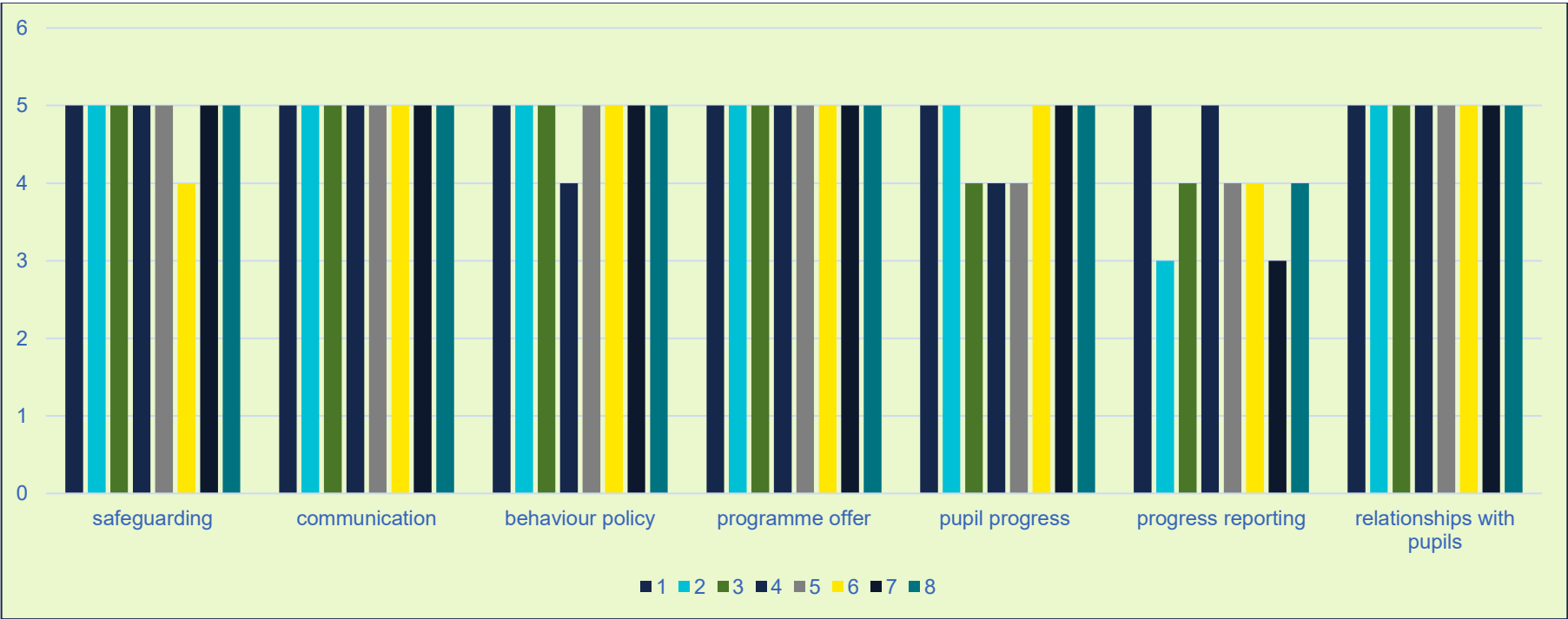
- Electric fences are not electrified except the central pig pen, and this is outside of tuition times
- All animal medications are kept to a minimum as Edfords is an Organic farm. Any medication is locked away in a separate building that only key staff have access to.
- Pupils are provided with a clear biohazard induction which informs their own health and safety responsibilities and washing routines. This was evidenced via worksheets completed by pupils.
- It was shared that no animals are showing signs of swine flu (pigs), and blue tongue (sheep, goats, alpacas).
- Only staff have limited access to poultry and waterfowl. This is to reduce the risk of bird flu infection.
- There is a pond which has a fence and natural fauna along its perimeter. There is also clear signage identifying deep water.
- Rat trap boxes can be seen alongside the outer wall of the butchery; they are artificial bait traps. No rat poison pellets are used.

Commissioners were contacted for feedback about the setting. Comments included:

- Aims
 - *The pupil attending this provision has not been engaged in school since March 2025. We wanted to encourage the pupil to start engaging with a provision that they enjoy and have a passion for. We aim for this to enable the pupil to build strong relationships with adults outside of the family home and to potentially receive qualifications which will aid their career aspirations later in life.*
 - *Student is fixated on being a farmer when [they grow] up, [they have] found school difficult and the farm helps [them] to learn a trade which [they are] interested in. As well as positive relationships and engagements with peers.*
 - *To offer a low demand environment outside that focuses on AQA Awards*
 - *To support the student's ASD and SEMH needs in the small group nurture support session in a nurturing environment.*
 - *To engage child in education / give [them] a day out of school to keep [them] in engaged. EHCP / Avoid PEX*
 - *Improve confidence and wellbeing, develop skills and experience with animal care working towards [their] Post 16 desired animal care course, building safe relationships with peers*
 - *To develop emotional regulation, confidence, and engagement in learning through structured, hands-on experiences with animals, providing a calm and motivating environment that supports positive behaviour, resilience, and improved attendance.*
 - *To build confidence and self-esteem for students with emotional based school avoidance*

- *The student attends the farm without any absences, unlike school. [They speak] highly of the farm and the staff there.*
- *Yes, our student is loving being there and it has help [them] improve in school.*
- *It is better than it was, yes, and has helped to avoid PEX / keep student in education*
- *Edfords has been a great provision for this young person and previous students. They have supported [their] ASD need and allowed [them] to be [themselves] which has been key for this young person.*
- *I have no complaints - Chris always updates me with policies and procedures. When there has been a SG issue, he has let us know (only once). Attendance is reported. Always responds to emails / phone calls etc*

Commissioners were asked to rate the provision as follows, out of 5, with 5 being the highest score:



Recommendations

Many of the recommendations above are elements which ideally, are discussed and agreed pre-placement. To ensure that no gaps are missed in future placements, leaders are advised to download and adapt the templates at [Unregulated alternative provision templates - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/unregulated-alternative-provision-templates) Leaders may also wish to create a file (hard copy or electronic) of evidence which might be requested by schools; see template 01 pre-placement visit checks for guidance. This will minimise administrative time at the point of enquiry.

Key recommendations are those which are rated red or amber in the table above. An update on these target areas will be carried within 3 months; this may be an unannounced visit. In addition, if new staff have been recruited since December 2025, safer recruitment checks (which may have been rated green above) will be re-checked for new staff.

Edfords Care Farm Leaders are reminded of the requirement in [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#) (p16 – LA Officer's bold type):

*Commissioners should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform in respect of their own staff. This includes written confirmation that **the alternative provision provider will inform the commissioner of any changes to arrangements that may put the child at risk, e.g. staff changes, so that the commissioner can assure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.***

P43 of the Edfords Care Farm Safeguarding Policy can be used for this purpose.

Review date: Full review autumn 2026 to be agreed with the proprietor to avoid busy periods such as Christmas

Quality assurance

V Groom, Head of Service, 19.03.2026

Report distributed to the following LA colleagues:

- **Amanda Walsh**, Head of Service, SEND and Statutory Operations
- **Andy Tovell**, Head of Alternative Provision Sufficiency Delivery
- **Annette Walker**, Transitional Education Team Manager
- **Ian Smart**, Elective Home Education Team Manager
- **Jackie Wu**, Commissioning and Service Development Manager
- **Keeley White**, Head of the Virtual School for Children in Care
- **Kim Breen**, Senior Advisor for SEND Specialist Provision and Funding

- **Sam Derbyshire**, Education and Training Officer (post-16)
- **Suzanne Allen**, Senior Adviser Inclusion
- **Vicki Setters**, Senior Adviser Inclusion, SEMH and Transitions

Appendix 1

Edfords Care Farm – Daily Timetable

- **Arrival: 10:00 – 10:10**
 - Welcome and introduction to the day.
 - Students place personal belongings in lockers.
 - Change into appropriate footwear and waterproofs as required.
 - Review the planned activities for the day.
 - Cover key safety information and outline any specific health and safety requirements.
- **Morning Activities: 10:10 – 12:30**
 - **Pig Care Routine**
 - Collective preparation of the morning pig feed, including discussion of feed rations and nutritional needs.
 - Feeding the pigs and checking pig arcs; adding straw where necessary.
 - Discussion or recap of rare breed knowledge, serving as an introduction for new students or a reminder for returning participants.
- **Break**
 - Return to the yard, wash hands, and take a short drink and toilet break.
- **Seasonal Tasks (AQA Unit Work)**
 - Engage in seasonal farm tasks aligned with the termly scheme of work and relevant AQA unit criteria.
 - Return to the yard and wash hands at the end of the session.
- **Lunch Break: 12:30 – 13:00**
- **Afternoon Activities: 13:00 – 14:30**
 - **Seasonal Tasks (AQA Unit Work)**
 - Continue with seasonal tasks contributing to AQA unit evidence and skill development.
 - Return to the yard and wash hands at the end of the session.
- **Additional Notes**
 - *All tasks and AQA units are determined by the time of year and the termly scheme of work. Activities may vary depending on farm needs, weather conditions, and student learning objectives.*
- **Animal Care Activity Frameworks**

- **Poultry Care Procedures**
 - **Before and During the Task**
 - Discuss the purpose of the task and ensure students understand what will be completed and why.
 - Review and follow correct safety precautions.
 - Select and prepare the appropriate equipment needed for the activity.
 - Remind students about expected behaviour around poultry, including calm movements and maintaining appropriate distance.
 - Provide clear, step-by-step instructions to support successful task completion.
 - Reinforce the importance of listening carefully and following instructions at all times.
 - Ensure all gates / doors are opened and closed correctly throughout the task.
- **After the Task**
 - Return all equipment to the correct storage area.
 - Wash hands thoroughly after handling animals, equipment, or entering/exiting the enclosure.
- **Alpaca Care Procedures**
 - **Before Entering the Enclosure**
 - Discuss safety considerations and appropriate behaviour when working with alpacas.
 - Review alpaca body language, potential risks, and safe approaches.
 - Remind students that alpacas may spit or kick if startled or approached incorrectly.
 - Provide clear aims and expected outcomes of the activity.
 - **Handling and Walking (If Applicable)**
 - Demonstrate correct handling techniques and appropriate behaviour while walking alpacas.
 - Reinforce the importance of listening and following instructions throughout.
 - Ensure all gates are closed securely after entering and exiting the enclosure.
 - Before leaving the enclosure with alpacas, reiterate handling expectations, behaviour guidelines, and individual alpaca needs.
 - Offer reminders or check-ins as needed while the activity is in progress.
 - **After the Task**
 - Return all equipment used to the appropriate location.
 - Wash hands thoroughly after completing the activity.
- **Sheep Care Procedures**
 - **Before Entering the Field**
 - Discuss safety expectations and appropriate behaviour around sheep.
 - Emphasise the importance of listening carefully and following instructions.

- Explain the purpose of the task, including the “how” and “why,” with clear aims and intended achievements.
 - Provide specific instructions to individuals and offer demonstrations of safe sheep handling where appropriate.
 - Reinforce caution and awareness due to sheep movement and flock dynamics.
 - Ensure participation is matched to each student’s comfort level and skill.
- **During and After the Task**
 - Ensure gates are closed correctly during all movements in and out of the field.
 - Return all equipment used to its designated storage area.
 - Wash hands thoroughly at the end of the session.
- **Pig Care Procedures**
 - **Before and During the Task**
 - Disconnect electric fencing safely before entering pig enclosures.
 - Discuss safety expectations and appropriate behaviour around pigs.
 - Remind students that pigs may only be stroked behind the head, and hands should never be placed in front of a pig’s face.
 - If the task involves more than feeding, clearly explain the purpose, steps, and expected outcomes.
 - Reinforce the importance of listening carefully and following all instructions.
 - Allow task participation to vary according to each student’s comfort level and skill.
- **After the Task**
 - Return all equipment to the correct storage area.
 - Wash hands thoroughly after leaving the enclosure or completing the activity.