

# SC020193

Registered provider: The SENAD Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to 25 children and young people who have complex communication and/or learning difficulties and/or severe challenging behaviours. It is part of a residential special school and is owned by a private organisation.

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 27 September 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 14 August 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Safeguarding is not robust enough to fully protect young people. New policies for safeguarding young people are not yet embedded.
- The living space in one residential area is not big enough to meet the needs of all the young people, especially at mealtimes. Furthermore, the outdoor play equipment is old and tired and in need of replacement.
- Staff morale is starting to lift but is still not good. Staff do not always feel valued.
- Staff do not have in-depth knowledge about every young person they work with. They know their key child well, but often do not work with them.
- Staff do not always have the right skills and experience to be able to care for the young person they are allocated to. Monitoring and support of probationary staff is not yet effective.
- Communication with parents has improved but is not yet good.
- Monitoring of incidents is not robust because staff do not always receive a debrief.
- Not all young people who require assistance to leave the building in an emergency have a personal emergency evacuation plan.

The children's home's strengths:

- The registered manager has taken meaningful steps to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. Change is happening quickly but is not yet fully embedded.
- Young people say this home is 'awesome'. They like living in this home. They are happy and relaxed around staff.
- Staffing levels are mostly good now. This has ensured that young people can access a range of activities in the community.
- Young people are very well prepared before participating in a new activity. This ensures that they enjoy the activity or participate without feeling anxious, for example going to the dentist.
- Young people are helped to have a better understanding of how their body works.
- Staff communicate well with young people using a range of communication aids.
- Young people are helped to move into adult services. Parents are also supported with their child's move.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 14/08/2017      | Full            | Inadequate              |
| 21/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 01/08/2016      | Full            | Good                    |
| 14/01/2016      | Interim         | Sustained 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, 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   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>6. (1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</li> <li>(b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</li> </ul> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) ensure that staff— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ii) protect and promote each child's welfare;</li> <li>(iii) treat each child with dignity and respect;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) meet the needs of each child.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 6 (1) and (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(c)(i))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the living space in Elizabeth House is big enough to meet the needs of all the young people especially at mealtimes. Also, ensure that outdoor play equipment is not hazardous so young people can continue to enjoy it safely.</p> | 31/10/2017 |
| <p>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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff do not delay in reporting unexplained bruising and other safeguarding concerns.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 09/10/2017 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</li> <li>promotes their welfare.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 31/10/2017 |

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—  
 ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;  
 ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;  
 ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.  
 (Regulation 13(1)(2)(b)(c)(e))

In particular, continue to boost staff morale and ensure that staff are knowledgeable about each young person and have the right skills and experience to be able to care for the young person they are allocated to.

## Recommendations

- Registered persons have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's parents (regulation 5 – engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). These working relationships will also be key to success in delivering the care planning standard (regulation 14). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with: each child; the home's staff; each child's family/carers where appropriate; and professionals involved in the care or protection of each child including their social worker, independent reviewing officer (IRO), teachers, clinicians and other health professionals etc. In particular, ensure that staff complete de-briefs after incidents and enable them to confidently ask for support when they need it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, comply with fire safety regulations by providing personal emergency evacuation plans for all young people who require assistance to leave the building when the fire alarm sounds. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Young people say that this home is 'awesome'! Young people appear happy and like living in this home.

The registered manager has implemented a number of new policies and increased staffing levels to address the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. However, new policies have not yet been fully embedded and other shortfalls have been identified.

The communal space in one of the houses is small. The dining table is, therefore, not big enough for all the young people and staff to sit together at mealtimes. This creates mealtimes that are task orientated rather than a social event because most staff are not eating with young people. This means that staff are unable to model acceptable table manners or social etiquette, or just chat with young people.

Due to the lack of seating around the table, some staff give guidance or support by standing behind the young person they are supporting. Guidance includes important instructions about slowing down while eating to prevent choking. Guidance given this way is usually ignored. Furthermore, this approach does not demonstrate respect for the young person or uphold their dignity, for example leaning over them to cut up their meal.

Outdoor play equipment is old and tired. For example, the tyre swing has broken links and the wood around the slide is starting to rot and splinter. The registered manager has plans to replace this equipment.

Communication with parents is generally good. Some good partnership work with parents has benefitted young people. For example, staff work closely with parents when young people are first admitted. This helps staff to get to know the young person. However, this can be improved to ensure that parents receive regular balanced reports about their child if requested.

Young people are in good health or are being helped to improve their health. Staff work closely with health professionals. Young people have access to a visiting psychiatrist and optician as well as a range of therapists. This means physical and emotional health needs are quickly identified and addressed. One young person has lost 10 and a half stone since admission because of a strict diet. He is very proud of this achievement and is a lot healthier. Another young person's medication was recently reviewed. There is now a decreased use of 'when required' medication.

Medication is safely managed. The medication administration system has recently been changed to an electronic system. This has helped to ensure that medication is given safely.

Young people are helped to have a better understanding of how their bodies work through the use of anatomically correct equipment. The equipment is used sensitively and appropriately. It is also ethnically correct, so young people can better relate to it.

Young people regularly attend the on-site school. They are often supported in class by care staff. This provides consistency and therefore helps young people access learning.

Communication with young people is very good. Staff have a good understanding of how individual young people communicate. A parent said that staff will video a sign that their child uses if they don't understand it. Parents will then be able to tell staff what the sign means. Staff use signing consistently and effectively with young people.

Opportunities for young people to experience a range of activities have increased. Young people are going swimming regularly. Clubs are restarting during the week, like youth club. Staff regularly accompany young people on walks, go shopping or go on trips out. Young people are prepared well using social stories and photographic strips to enable them to access unfamiliar activities, such as going to the swimming pool or going to the dentist. Risk management of activities is generally good. When issues have occurred, staff have reflected and the risk assessments are appropriately updated. For example, a newly admitted young person went out with one member of staff. This trip highlighted that he requires two members of staff. His risk assessment has been updated to reflect this change.

Young people are supported very well to move in to adult services. A dedicated member of staff oversees transitions from the home. She will accompany parents to view potential adult services. She communicates well with external professionals to help young people have a smooth transition.

Staff help young people to learn life skills such as personal hygiene, domestic chores and dressing. A parent said: 'They are doing pretty well with him. He has made progress and he is starting to do more independence skills. He is starting to do things for himself.' Young people say that they like their rooms. However, some houses/apartments are more homely than others. Young people enjoy access to outdoor play equipment, bikes, a sensory suite and a soft play room.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Safeguarding is not robust enough to fully protect young people. New policies for safeguarding young people are not yet embedded. For example, bruises or marks with an unknown cause are not being signed off by management in line with agreed policies, and not escalated to the safeguarding manager. Young people are known to self-harm but the system of review is not being used properly.

A potential safeguarding concern was not reported to the safeguarding team for eight days. This may have put young people at continued risk of harm. However, a new safeguarding manager has been appointed who has responsibility across the whole

school. Furthermore, he has a direct line of accountability and is supervised by the responsible individual. This gives the safeguarding manager more autonomy, and a senior manager within the company has oversight. The safeguarding manager has implemented new systems but these have not yet been embedded.

Positive behaviour is promoted. Staff have good relationships with young people. Any use of restraint is appropriate. The frequency of restraint is reducing. Staff are well trained. They use good de-escalation techniques. Staff do not have the opportunity to reflect on incidents because debriefs often do not take place. Managers are missing this opportunity to analyse incidents in detail. However, the registered manager has identified this as a shortfall and is promoting staff awareness. Sanctions are rarely used but are appropriate and effective.

Not all young people currently have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). These are required because all young people need support to leave the building in an emergency. However, where PEEPs are in place they have improved. Staff and young people regularly practise fire evacuation. PEEPs are reviewed and updated to reflect learning from evacuations.

Young people say that they feel safe. They do not report bullying as an issue. They have missing from care protocols and do not go missing. Staff have a good understanding of the home's missing from care procedures.

Vetting procedures help to protect young people from unsuitable adults. There is an improved system to recruit agency staff. This means that staff involved in recruitment are more effective in ensuring that agency staff are suitable to work with young people.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Staff are not always aware of the care needs of each young person they work with. For example, staff were not aware that a young person requires a sports bottle to drink out of rather than a beaker. Key workers know their key child very well. However, they complain that they do not often work with their key child. Young people have a core team but often are being cared for by other staff who are not in their core team. Parents complain that they speak to staff who do not normally work with their child. This can lead to inconsistency because of a lack of in-depth knowledge of each young person.

New staff who are young and inexperienced sometimes do not feel well supported. For example, one member of staff felt that she had not had an opportunity to ask for help or was not given help when a young person was displaying unacceptable behaviour towards her for a prolonged period of time. This may have contributed to an incident in which the member of staff was unprofessional towards the young person. Monitoring and support is not yet effective for probationary staff.

Staff do not always feel valued. They say that they would like more incentives to be provided. They would like team-building days to help with consistency. Nevertheless, staff say that they feel more positive and morale is starting to lift.

The number of staff on duty has increased. This means that there are usually enough staff on duty to meet the young people's needs. Staff view this positively and are enjoying the increased opportunities to go into the community with young people.

The majority of staff are either qualified or completing an appropriate qualification. A large number of staff are experienced and have worked in the home for many years. Staff appreciate the increased presence of the registered manager in the houses. This ensures that he is accessible. Staff retention is improving. This means young people are more familiar with the staff who are supporting them.

The registered manager is experienced and appropriately qualified. The registered manager has responded to the problems identified at the previous inspection. He has ensured that all placing authorities and parents are aware of the shortfalls and the actions taken to secure improvement. He has demonstrated an open and transparent approach. He acknowledges that, although shortfalls are being addressed, new ways of working are not yet fully embedded.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** SC020193

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** The SENAD Group Limited

**Registered provider address:** Senad Group Ltd, 1 St. Georges House, Vernon Gate,  
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**Responsible individual:** Mark Flynn

**Registered manager:** David Hancox

## Inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

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