

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	06/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC487165
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Serenity Care Homes Ltd
Registered provider address	Greenacres, Silver Street, Hordle, LYMINGTON, Hampshire SO41 0FN

Responsible individual	Deborah Lymbery
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Amanda Maxwell

Inspection date	06/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	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 good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. The home has been through an extensive period of change and challenge since the last inspection. The registered manager has resigned (to manage a sister home in the organisation) and a new manager has been appointed. His application for registration with Ofsted has not yet been received. He is managing the role well and receives support from both the previous manager and the responsible individual. Since the last inspection two young people have left the home. One of these has moved on to greater independence but the other left following an assault on another young person in the home. This was the culmination of a protracted period of bullying. There has been one admission. This child has had a disruptive settling in period; the staff have been committed to meeting his needs throughout this process. The admission is understood to have been undertaken with careful assessment, although there is limited written evidence of this work. Managers did not fully consider the impact of this admission might have on others already residing in the home. Leaders and managers have identified that they have had a positive impact on the young person's behaviours. Incidents have reduced in duration and significance with staff developing strategies to support and manage the young person which mean this placement is already longer than his other placements have been. There has been a great deal of damage caused to the home in recent months. There has been work to repair and make good some damage but there continues to be a further work required to ensure the home returns to its previous standard of presentation. Managers have responded to complaints made by young people; records show that young people have been responded to and provided with details regarding the outcome of their complaint. Complaints received from others outside the home have been recorded, but records lack details of the outcome and response given to the complainant.	

Staff maintain records of behavioural incidents, however, from the evidence trail in the home is not clear if staff have made the record within required timescales. The records do state if a young person has been spoken to post-incident, but on occasions this has been several days after the incident occurred and, in during this unsettled time, may therefore have covered several incidents during that session. The records do not make the clear the detail of these discussions and this has impacted on the capacity to review and reflect on these. Many incidents have not been monitored or reviewed within required timescales.

Staff have responded professionally to serious incidents in the home. On one occasion, they were unable to de-escalate the negative behaviours expressed by young people and requested police involvement to support them. Records detail what occurred and which strategies staff implemented. There is no evidence that all the young people involved or present during the incident have been spoken to or been able to express their views and feelings about the incident. Staff did not review their own actions, strategies used, or the impact and effectiveness of their involvement.

Young people have been sanctioned or given consequences following negative behaviours or damage to property. Staff keep a log of the sanctions given but records lack detail, such as evidence of whether the young person has been consulted, how long the sanction is in place for, or how effective it has been. A sanction had been detailed which suggested a young person could earn an item back, but the records lack detail to specify exactly what was required to achieve this. Young people have been rewarded for cooperating and completing routine daily tasks. However, for one young person staff have sometimes given energy drinks as a reward, which is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Young people who are engaging in education are making good academic progress and are well supported by staff. Those who are not in full-time education are not engaged in daily routines or meaningful activities which provide structure to their day. During inspection, they were observed to spend long periods of time in their bedrooms, playing computer games and listening to music.

Episodes of missing from the home are well managed and coordinated, with staff seeking young people and supporting them on their return to the home. Staff follow detailed missing plans that describe the individual response required for each young person. One plan had not been personalised to reflect the exact response required.

Staff have supported and encouraged young people to engage in specialist services identified to meet their needs. For example, they have proactively sought support from the child and adolescent mental health service. Staff have been effective in developing relationships with families and carers. They facilitate and enable positive contact between young people and their families, and ensure that there is regular review of plans.

Safer recruitment processes are improving with new systems and procedures in place. However, records of recruitment examined still did not have all checks clearly in place at the time of initial employment.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four children who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties. The home is owned by a private company, and is located in a semi-rural location within easy access of the local services and community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32(i))	30/03/2017
The protection of children standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(2)(a)(iv);(d))	30/03/2017
Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that: (a) within 24 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes: () a description of the measure and its duration () details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure () the name of the person who used the measure, and of any person present when the measure was used () the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (b) 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 (i) has spoken to the user about the measure, and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate and (c) within five days of the use of the measure, the registered	30/03/2017

person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(iv)(v)(vi);(b)(i)(ii);(c))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- When children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Expectations of standards of behaviour should be high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Children should be supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. The development of safe, stable and secure relationships with staff in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- When there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. Specifically, this should detail the individual response for each individual child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as

recorded in the child's relevant plans and when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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