

SC487165

Registered provider: Serenity Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The staff at this home care for children who have experienced trauma and dysfunction within their family environments, have difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviours and have experienced several care placements.

The registered manager has been in post since 26 April 2017.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 August 2019

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 **inadequate**

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: 8 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/04/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/07/2017	Full	Good

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
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 use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	05/09/2019
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14(1)(2)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff fully assess the compatibility of children's needs when making a decision about who comes to live here.	05/09/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that a child's	05/09/2019

daily routines, and the environment of the home, support their education sufficiently well.	
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Recommendations

- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

In particular, the registered person should review whether they are satisfied that the independent person rigorously identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the service and reports any shortfalls to them.

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that their six-monthly review results in a detailed development plan which is carefully monitored and amended as necessary.

Inspection judgements

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

Managers do not consistently make good decisions about who moves into the home. In one instance, a new child moved into the home, but managers had not identified and planned to minimise potential conflicts with other children's needs. This child's placement plan did not account for the other children's needs, and staff were not able to manage the relationships well. Since this child has left, no other children have moved in. The relationship between the two children who remained has been more positive.

Children's health is mostly promoted well. Staff are aware of children's ongoing health needs, and are suitably trained to manage medication and self-harm. First aid is appropriately given and children's attendance at appointments with healthcare professionals is promoted. One child confirmed that his mental health had improved because of the support he got here. Stronger boundaries to support children to stop smoking have been implemented, but have yet to result in positive changes to the children's smoking habits.

Monthly summaries of children's progress are written well. The summaries provide a good overview of children's progress and areas for development. However, managers have not continually and carefully reviewed incidents to learn about how the staff's support affects children's development. They have not consistently checked that the staff's written versions of events are what actually happened. For example, the record of one incident did not include detailed enough descriptions of what had occurred; this should have been questioned by the leaders and managers.

The staff persistently challenge the local authority if children are not getting an education. At the last inspection, a recommendation was made to improve how the home's environment supports children's education. This recommendation was not met. Educational books were piled on the floor in an upstairs lounge. Plans for good daily routines are made, but these are not followed regularly.

Children's independence and participation in activities are supported well. Staff encourage children who live here to go out socially together as well as take part in their own paid and free activities. Staff have successfully supported one child to go out of the home on a regular basis. Previously he would not do this.

Staff successfully support children to establish and maintain links with important people in their lives. A child recently made contact with a member of his family who he has not seen for some time. The staff's quick response to arranging this get-together assisted in ensuring that this opportunity was not lost.

Staff actively advocate on behalf of the children and help them to engage with independent advocacy services. This has improved children's trust in staff and helped them to build positive relationships with the staff. If children move on from the home, staff support them to do this, and make clear plans for how they will keep in touch with each child.

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

Health and safety checks are not always vigilantly monitored. Some checks resulted in measures being taken to improve safety. For example, an external fire risk assessment resulted in changes being made to the external environment. However, some food in the fridge-freezer was not labelled or sealed appropriately. The manager immediately sorted the contents of the fridge-freezer, planned food hygiene training for all staff and arranged

daily monitoring.

The boundaries that the staff have set for children have not always been appropriate or consistently followed. The staff have not ensured that daily routines are followed or that, as a team, they consistently manage difficult behaviours well. Staff said that they are now working together better. However, they acknowledged that they must continue to develop their approach to teamwork, to increase consistency.

Leaders, managers and staff do not always question whether children's interactions constitute bullying, and do not investigate any potential concerns carefully. For instance, when a child often told staff about other children continually annoying him, no one made sure that each instance of this was fully reviewed.

Staff know the internal safeguarding procedures well. They are clear about their personal responsibilities to escalate concerns to outside agencies. Children go missing less often. When staff do not manage missing incidents well, this is now identified and acted on.

Restraint is infrequently used. There is now an in-house trainer for the behaviour management system the staff use. He is reducing the time it takes to train new staff, and is providing good guidance for staff on what restraints should be used taking into account children's individual needs.

Children's risk assessments take account of their needs, are known by staff and provide guidance on the strategies staff should follow to manage difficult behaviours. Leaders and managers do not always ensure that all relevant strategies are reviewed when new information is received or an incident occurs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is leaving his post on 20 August 2019 and a new manager took up the post three weeks prior to this inspection.

Reviewing and monitoring systems are ineffective in covering all aspects of the service provision. For example, in May 2019, when several incidents occurred at night, no systematic review was undertaken in order to learn from these and to review practice. The lack of prompt and thorough review did not enable managers to:

- understand potential triggers and themes;
- check individual and group staff practice;
- review the staff's ability to record effectively;
- decide on the actions that need to be taken to improve the care provided; for example, leaders and managers did not make changes to immediately improve how staff monitor children during the night;
- question the quality of the monthly visitor's checks; the visitor has not identified and reported on several issues found at this inspection.

The home's development plan is unambitious. It is not based on an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and the findings of the six-monthly report on the quality of service. The plan does not include a clear overall programme of action or demonstrate how it is to be reviewed and monitored; especially as competing demands occur.

Leaders and managers have now started to show greater ambition in regard to how they lead, monitor and manage the home. This is having a beneficial effect on staff morale, and staff said that they can see there is better leadership and direction. They are listened to and are being involved in decisions about the home more frequently.

It is positive to note that during the inspection leaders and managers confirmed that a new alarm system for bedroom doors is to be installed. However, a date for installation has not yet been agreed.

The latest six-monthly report is less evaluative and analytical than the previous report. The latest report does not evaluate and analyse how the staff's care and support have affected children's progress. Children's and other adults' views on the care provided are not used to inform the report.

Staff support and training are improving. Staff confirmed that they receive regular supervision which they find helpful. They said that it acknowledges their strengths and helps them to improve any weaknesses. Where staff performance is of concern, appropriate steps are taken to improve this and make clear plans for improvement. Training is better coordinated and more responsive, and is reviewed more carefully to ensure that it meets children's needs. Plans to develop in-house training, such as training on restraints, are assisting in supporting the staff's knowledge overall.

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: SC487165

Provision sub-type: 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: Matthew Langran

Inspector

Ruth Coler: social care inspector

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