

1249111

Serenity Care Homes Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The staff at this home care for children who have specific attachment, behavioral, emotional and social needs because of their childhood experiences.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2020.

Inspection date: 11 and 12 June 2020

This monitoring visit

This monitoring inspection was undertaken in response to Ofsted being made aware of potential concerns for children's care that were alleged to have arisen as a result of the provider closing a home and moving the children into this home. In accordance with Ofsted guidance on COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions, this inspection was undertaken remotely. Telephone discussions were held with the responsible individual, acting manager, staff and social workers. Relevant documents were emailed to the inspector and these were considered along with information gained through the inspectors' remote access to the home's online recording system.

The responsible individual and home manager have a clear rationale for why they closed one home and moved the children into this home. This was done in order to overcome the operational difficulties caused by COVID-19. They considered there to be insufficient numbers of experienced staff in the home where two of the children were living and they were unable to recruit to vacant posts due to the pandemic. In the circumstances, this is within current guidance. The decision to move children was agreed with placing authorities prior to their move.

The handover prior to the two children moving into the home was sufficiently detailed, given the time available. It provided staff with the information required to provide continuity of care for the children. The majority of the staff in the home already knew the children well because they had cared for them previously in the

home that they transferred from. The home's size and design were considered to be better for the children, and there is a larger outside space for them to enjoy. There are no undue restrictions of liberty in the home, and the inspector was assured by the manager that the children are not 'locked in'.

The care and support plan was adjusted for one child when they moved to this home. This is because the home manager felt that the previous approach was overly restrictive on the younger child's ability to make choices and to adapt to changes to his routines. There was concern that his bedtime routine was being seen as a chore, and the new approach to supporting this child has, in the main, been successful. The responsible individual had not recognised how restrictive the child's plans and routines were until they were relaxed, and she describes him as a 'happier' child.

Impact risk assessments and the matching of children were considered prior to the children moving into this home. Staff assessed that the risk of two children going missing from the home together was low, given that their desire to be missing was for different reasons. The impact risk assessment for the younger child identifies that he requires two staff members to support him, particularly during trips out. Staff have, on at least two occasions, taken the child out in the community, to potentially risky places, without the required level of staffing.

Rotas show that the home is mostly operating with three staff working per shift. When there have been only two staff, the home manager has been filling in, but crucially not on the morning shift on 31 May 2020 – the first weekend the children were living together – when a trip to the beach took place. There were two staff members with three children. Children went swimming in the sea, and the provider did not have a risk assessment in place to ensure that this activity was safe. At the time, there was no lifeguard at the beach, nor the required amount of staffing. The home manager said that he takes full responsibility that the trip was not in line with children's support needs.

There has been no increase in the number of incidents since the two children moved into the home. Some of the records of incidents do not make it clear that other options may be available to a child when they are upset, such as going to another area rather than his bedroom to calm. Other aspects of recording are not clear or consistent. For example, a decision for children to not go out as a group is recorded as a sanction but is explained by the home manager as a behaviour support response. The use of financial sanctions, for example removing money from a child's clothing allowance to fund the cost of staff overtime, is not in keeping with the home's prescribed approach of restorative practice. The one physical intervention to have taken place since the move appears to have been appropriate in its use but has not been comprehensively recorded. This leads to lack of clarity as to whether the child and staff have had the opportunity to debrief and learn in order to inform future responses to incidents.

The responsible individual assured the inspector that the home remains financially viable and the furlough of two members of staff is due to their being unfit to work, rather than for cost-saving purposes. She said that she remains in contact with both and expects them to return to their roles. The two homes have been without registered managers for a variety of reasons, including that of seeking the right candidate for the role.

This home has a manager in post who is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted. The operations manager is currently unable to return to the United Kingdom due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, although the home manager is able to contact her at any time for advice and guidance. The leaders and managers of the home have, on the whole, provided suitable support for the children, and the placement moves were well managed. Children are making progress and settling in well, but it is a serious concern that the requirement in relation to poor risk assessments made at the last inspection in April 2019 remains an ongoing concern.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2019	Full	Good
02/05/2018	Full	Good
15/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/07/2017	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 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 that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	07/07/2019
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; 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 ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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') 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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	07/07/2019

Recommendations

- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1249111

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Serenity Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Golden Lion, 99 Alresford Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 0JZ

Responsible individual: Deborah Lymbery

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

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