

# 1249111

Registered provider: Serenity Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private organisation. The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 14 October 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

### Inspection dates: 18 to 19 May 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 30 April 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## 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

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people:

The overall experiences and progress of children are judged inadequate because of significant shortfalls in safeguarding practice, concerns about the safety of the physical environment and the lack of effective oversight of the leaders and the managers of the home.

The admission process does not take into account all relevant factors when assessing the impact of moving a new child into the home. As a result, the behaviours and safety of one child has deteriorated as a result of being influenced by a peer who moved into the home. The provider failed to assess the compatibility of placing these two children together and did not identify any additional support needed to mitigate risks.

Children know how to complain. However, they do not feel listened to. One child informed Ofsted that external doors and the downstairs toilet door were always locked. Concerns about this were raised by the child and the local authority. The senior leaders and the management have not shown how they have addressed the complaint or how they ensure that children's freedom is not unnecessarily hindered.

The home has CCTV cameras fitted in communal areas, such as the downstairs/upstairs hallways, main lounge and kitchen. This is an intrusion of their privacy and there is no evidence that this is necessary to safeguard and to promote their welfare.

Key-work sessions and support to children in caring for their pets and maintaining their rooms are not always effective in ensuring that children's rooms are maintained to an acceptable standard. In one example, a child's pet rat had been left outside of the cage and the carpet was stained with rat urine and droppings. This had not been addressed by staff and presented a significant health risk.

Children are supported to build and maintain positive relationships with their parents and people that they have significant relationships with, such as previous foster carers. Family time is promoted through planned family visits and celebrations of special occasions, such as birthdays, Christmas and anniversaries.

Staff work collaboratively with multi-agency professionals. Children access mental healthcare and attend regular medical appointments. Children moving into the home have made progress in relation to their health and physical well-being.

Staff work alongside external professionals to help and support the provision of protected space where children can reflect on their emotions and feelings. This support has been sustained throughout Covid-19 restrictions through both face-to-face and virtual appointments.

The children's participation in their education has been constant. Children are home schooled, and their engagement has been encouraged and led by staff. Staff have identified suitable educational placements for children, and one child has a clear plan to start at her new school.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected:**

Children are at risk of significant harm. They continue to run into the busy road outside the home and in nearby areas, exposing themselves and others to serious risk of harm. The measures identified in children's plans to mitigate the identified risks are not consistently followed and are not always realistic. On some occasions, there were not enough staff to implement safety plans and to provide sufficient support to prevent children from harm. In some instances, children's risk assessments do not indicate clear measures to be taken by staff to keep children safe.

The location risk assessment for this home does not identify the risks posed by the busy road and a nearby cliff. There have been examples where these aspects of the home's location have placed children at significant risk of harm.

Risk management strategies for substantial risks to children are inadequate. The senior leaders and the management have not ensured that essential guidance is provided to staff to keep children safe. Measures used by staff, such as locking external fire doors, create a barrier to the safe evacuation of the home in the event of a fire. This places children and staff at risk of harm.

Children live in a home that is not suitable to meet their needs. The maintenance of their bedrooms and some other areas of the home is poor. A new kitchen has recently been fitted and the lounge has been refurbished. However, broken window restrictors, a smashed bathroom window, damaged bedroom fire doors, threadbare carpet on the stair and a broken electric plug socket all contribute to an unsafe environment.

The organisation does not use effective safer recruitment procedures when employing members of staff. Some individuals who work with children are not suitably checked when they start employment. In some instances, employment history checks and references are missing. This affects children's safety.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers:**

Since the last inspection, a new manager has been recruited and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. During this inspection, she demonstrated an awareness of children's needs and how to communicate effectively with children. The manager, however, showed limited understanding and oversight of the shortfalls in the standard of safeguarding practice in the home. The poor oversight by the organisation's senior leadership team has meant that these shortfalls have not been addressed.

Staff receive regular supervisions. These are completed by the senior staff and the management who have completed supervision training. The induction process is not well planned, and risk assessed adequately. For example, new members of staff work in the home and have access to confidential information before all recruitment checks are completed.

Staff are not provided with all required training and guidance to assist them in keeping children safe. As a result, staff do not have an adequate understanding of the complex and risk-taking behaviours that the children sometimes demonstrate. This impairs their ability to effectively assess risk and keep children safe.

Systems for checking the quality of care being provided are weak and ineffectual. The manager does not have an effective internal quality assurance audit system in place. The senior leaders and the manager do not provide oversight or review the quality of care regularly. Weaknesses in the implementation of monitoring systems has resulted in poor standards of practice not being addressed.

The leaders and the managers have not ensured that Ofsted is consistently notified when serious incidents occur. This includes a failure to notify Ofsted that children placed themselves and others in life-threatening situations while in the community and in the home. Failure to report incidents has the potential to undermine Ofsted's ability to maintain oversight of the home and of actions that are to be taken to keep children safe.

## 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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>Repeat requirement</p>	4 July 2021
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	4 July 2021
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p>	4 July 2021

<p>promotes their welfare</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(2)(c))</p> <p>Repeat requirement</p>	
<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 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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))</p>	<p>4 July 2021</p>
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home—</p> <p>paragraph (1) does not apply; and</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b))</p>	<p>4 July 2021</p>
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy.</p> <p>(Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))</p>	<p>4 July 2021</p>

<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>	4 July 2021
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person.</p> <p>(Regulation 46 (1) (2))</p>	4 July 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.</p> <p>(Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	4 July 2021
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a</p>	4 July 2021



person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that although a child's bedroom should not generally be entered without their permission, it may be necessary to establish routines to allow for rooms to be cleaned regularly, particularly to support any child caring for small animals ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 1249111

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

**Registered provider:** Serenity Care Homes Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Conkers Cottage, Brockhills Farm, Sway Road, Tiptoe, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 6FQ

**Responsible individual:** Deborah Lymbery

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

Anna Williams, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager

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