

SC463558

Registered provider: The Serendipity Centre Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to six children. It is privately owned by an organisation that has two other homes and a school. Its statement of purpose states that it specialises in caring for girls who have experienced significant trauma resulting in emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

A manager was appointed in June 2018.

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 October 2018

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: 19 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Two compliance notices were issued on 9 July 2018 regarding Regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and Regulation 13, the leadership and management standard.

A monitoring visit took place on 14 August 2018 and the compliance notices were judged to have been met. A report on the monitoring visit was published.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/06/2018	Full	Inadequate
16/05/2017	Full	Good
31/10/2016	Full	Good
29/06/2016	Interim	Declined in 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>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—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(iii)(v))</p>	12/12/2018
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p>	12/12/2018
<p>If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (4))</p>	12/12/2018
<p>*The registered person must ensure that 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; is necessary and proportionate; and is kept under review and, if necessary, revised. (Regulation 21 (c)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>This particularly applies to the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV).</p>	12/12/2018

<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration; and</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(vi))</p>	<p>12/12/2018</p>
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* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- 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. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, paragraph 3.9, page 15)
- Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child’s needs. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, paragraph 3.10, page 15)

Inspection judgements

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

For some children outcomes are poor. Inconsistent admission planning, the approach to risk assessments and a lack of professional curiosity contribute to this. When some children make poor choices, placing themselves at risk, staff do not always challenge these decisions.

Children say that they are happy and safe in the home. They develop an attachment and a sense of belonging. They speak positively of the new staff team.

Staff do not always recognise when a child is making a complaint, for example when the child has told staff or the independent visitor about their worries but has not written it on the formal complaints form.

Children are in good health. Staff have ensured that children have their looked after child medical and that they can access the services that they need. The organisation's own counsellor is available to the children to support them with their emotional needs.

Staff are effective in supporting children's learning. Staff support children to attend school and college, with some children's attendance improving from having a reduced timetable when moving into the home.

Children enjoy a range of activities inside the home and in the wider community. They are encouraged to develop their dance skills and they attend youth camps for the first time.

Staff support children to maintain relationships with the individuals who are important to them. This may be coordinating face-to-face arrangements or supporting children to use electronic communication. Children have access to advocates.

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

Staff do not always recognise the underlying message that a child is trying to convey when they disclose personal information; staff do not always consider the wider contextual safeguarding concerns. They delayed, by several days in one case, writing down what a child had said. The key staff who are responsible for safeguarding did not take swift action to fully protect her. A placing social worker expressed her frustration with the poor sharing of important information.

On the whole, risk assessment practices within the home are not robust enough. Within risk assessments some key risks are not included. This increases the likelihood that children will not be properly protected. Staff do not always question the established behaviour patterns of some children, who, determined to become independent, are behaving in a way that may put them at risk.

Staff use sanctions proportionally and appropriately. They link any restriction to the behaviour and review the measure for its effectiveness. Some restraint records do not meet the standards set out in the regulations: they do not identify all of the staff who were involved in the restraint or its duration. Staff do not routinely sign and date debriefs. In one case, it was unclear why staff did not discuss the different accounts that children gave about the same incident.

Staff take time to look for children who go missing from the home. They use strategies such as children sharing their location on their smart phone, so that staff know where they are. Staff work appropriately with other agencies such as the police. The independent visitor has identified shortfalls in missing person records. Staff have taken steps to improve relevant policies, but these are yet to be tested in practice.

Children say that they feel safe and secure. They do not feel the need to resort to harmful behaviour, such as substance misuse, as coping strategies. They do not commit

criminal offences in the local community.

The manager has consulted with fire professionals and has reviewed the fire risk assessment. Any necessary remedial work has been completed, as required at the last inspection.

The manager ensures that safer recruitment practice is applied. Recruitment records are much improved.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Children live in a home that is managed inconsistently. The responsible individual has not maintained sufficient oversight to ensure that all staff make key decisions collaboratively, particularly regarding safeguarding arrangements and risk assessment practices. This undermines the quality of care that is provided to the children.

The management structure is complex and there is a lack of clear roles and responsibilities. This has led to inconsistent management monitoring. Managers did not challenge the admission of a child without proper placement plans and risk assessments and they were not clear about the date of admission. They also did not identify the incomplete chronologies within missing persons records. Managers do not always investigate the rationale for the conclusions that staff include in incident records or how staff have concluded that a child was not at risk. Managers do not immediately write down disclosures when children have spoken directly to one of them.

Managers accepted a placement from one of the organisation's other homes at short notice. A review was not undertaken following admission. This meant that important information was missing, there was no up-to-date placement plan and a child's risky behaviour was not discussed. This led to an ill-informed response by staff when a child placed herself at risk. Staff did not immediately recognise the concerns or report them effectively to the placing social worker.

The home's website contains information that is incorrect. It refers to the home as a residential special school, does not have the most recent Ofsted report uploaded and has the wrong statement of purpose. This gives placing social workers incorrect information.

Senior leaders have made the decision to retain CCTV in communal areas. They say that they will not accept a placement unless the use of CCTV is agreed beforehand. This blanket approach is not underpinned by a clear risk assessment for each child that identifies the safeguarding reasons to justify the use of CCTV, and there has been no regular review of its use. As a result, children's privacy is compromised. Leaders have not sought to understand the potential impact of this practice on the culture of the home and the underlying messages to children. This is subject to a compliance notice being issued.

Children live in a home that is well decorated and furnished. Some parts of the environment distract away from this, for example old nursing call points, bulky

combination locks on bedroom doors and locks on all internal doors, including a downstairs toilet.

Children do not always have access to the kitchen/dining room, which is the hub of the home, as staff may hold meetings with professionals there. Children expressed a desire to sit in the front of the car when travelling. Although there is no presenting risk, staff do not allow this.

The manager has responded to the previous requirement to provide a telephone line for children's use. There has been a delay in achieving this due to the need for telecommunications engineers to lay a new line to the house. This work is due to be completed in November 2018.

Senior leaders have been successful in recruiting an experienced and qualified staff team. They work well together, and morale is high. A child said, 'The home has improved and is a lot better with the new staff.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and children. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and children. They watched how professional staff work with children and children and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and children 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 children 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: SC463558

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Serendipity Centre Limited

Registered provider address: 1st Floor, Goodlands House, St Luke's Close, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2US

Responsible individual: Susan Tinson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Keith Riley: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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