

# SC485423

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 five children. It is privately owned by an organisation which has other homes and an educational setting in the vicinity. Its statement of purpose states that it specialises in caring for young people who have experienced significant trauma resulting in emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties.

A manager with suitable experience and qualifications has been registered with Ofsted since February 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 November 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      requires improvement to be good

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:** 6 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2017	Full	Good
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/07/2016	Full	Good
01/02/2016	Interim	Sustained 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 registered person must ensure that any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>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>	18/01/2019
<p>Subject to paragraph (5), the registered person must ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home—</p> <p>a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private;</p> <p>and facilities to send and receive post and, if the necessary facilities are provided for the use of children, electronic mail, in private.</p> <p>(Regulation 22(3)(a)(b))</p>	18/01/2019
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))</p>	18/01/2019
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(4)(b)(c))</p>	18/01/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	18/01/2019

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(vi))</p> <p>This especially applies to ensuring that investigations are independent and of suitable quality.</p>	
<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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	18/01/2019
<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 the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure.</p> <p>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. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(vii) (b)(i))</p>	18/01/2019

## 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.9, page 15) This especially applies to the use of locks throughout the home in communal areas.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff ensure that young people have access to the services that they need. This includes referrals to specialist services if necessary. A placing social worker said she would like to see more progress in improving a particular aspect of the health of a young person. The procedure for managing medication is cumbersome. Staff obtain medication via an external ordering system. This means that there can be a delay in young people receiving their medication. For example, there is the potential for young people to be unwell or experience discomfort before they receive their prescribed antibiotics. Likewise, over-the-counter medicines require a prescription. Staff must go through a lengthy process to obtain over-the-counter medicines, such as for headaches, including for young people who need them straight away.

Staff provide some young people with a mobile phone so that they can easily contact those who are important to them, including external agencies. Although most young people have access to a mobile phone, not all do. Instead, they must ask staff for access to a landline or electronic communication. The rationale for these restrictions is not clear and compromises the young people's ability to use such facilities freely.

Young people have access to most parts of the home, but the staff routinely lock two doors leading to the office. This causes anxiety and tension for some young people who are keen to talk to the staff about their needs. Communal areas are not routinely locked. However, due to the nature of the locks on doors, there is no means of escape in an emergency if a room is locked. Staff do not allow young people to sit in the front of company vehicles. The reason for this has not been clearly communicated to staff, including the manager. As a result, there is the potential for conflicting messages to be given to the young people. Young people express their disappointment and frustration with this approach.

Staff are generally effective in supporting the young people's learning. Staff support most young people to attend school and college. One young person expressed their delight at starting a course of their choice. For other young people not in education, employment or training, staff help them search for an apprenticeship.

Young people say that they feel safe and happy in the home following some turbulence since the last inspection. They live in an inclusive environment where they are free to express their individual identity without fear of bullying or harassment. Young people describe good relationships with staff.

Key workers encourage young people to talk about many aspects of their lives. The key staff keep good records of what has been covered, with attention to how the young people keep themselves safe. Young people fill out worry forms if they have any concerns. Staff response is prompt and documented well.

Young people enjoy a range of activities inside the home and in the wider community. Staff enjoy participating in activities with young people in the home. Young people

develop independence and social skills through attendance at dance groups and youth clubs.

Staff support the young people to maintain relationships with individuals who are important to them. This may include coordinating arrangements or supporting the young people to use electronic communication.

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

Safeguarding concerns and incidents are not consistently reported by senior leaders to external safeguarding agencies in accordance with statutory guidance. On one occasion, an investigation was completed by senior leaders without notifying the placing social worker or the designated officer of the concern. Other examples demonstrate a lack of detail in the information shared by senior leaders, as well as insufficient challenge from senior leaders in response to the advice and guidance they have received from external agencies. These practice shortfalls undermine the effectiveness of procedures that are designed to protect young people.

Staff record restraints and ensure that they debrief the young people following the use of such measures. The registered manager debriefs the staff who have been involved. Although the record is signed to indicate this, the nature of the discussion is not recorded. The evidence to learn from incidents and improve practice is not persuasive. One example includes the involvement of a senior leader in a restraint, although this person was not suitably trained to do so. Staff may use sanctions to correct poor behaviour. Although these sanctions are proportionate and appropriate at first use, staff have repeated some sanctions even though they have not been successful in correcting behaviour. This approach would benefit from a review.

The registered manager demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that young people are as safe as possible. One example included going to a known place and observing the risk a young person had placed themselves in. The registered manager was persistent in voicing her concerns to other professionals until they agreed a new safety plan. Young people feel safe and secure in the home, and behaviour, such as self-injurious behaviour, diminishes.

Staff work with young people so that young people understand how to keep themselves safe in the cyber world. Young people who are able to have their own phones agree a phone contract for acceptable use of their electronic device. They understand that staff may, for example, check their social media accounts to ensure that they are behaving responsibly.

Young people going missing from care is rare. When an incident has occurred, staff have responded in a timely and effective way, keeping good written records of their actions.

Young people 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. Staff are readily available to listen to young people's worries and concerns.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The statement of purpose describes a therapeutic approach based on an attachment model. This specific model is not evident in practice and staff do not receive formal training in attachment theory. The omission undermines the good-quality care practice that is apparent. The registered manager places young people at the centre of practice through the provision of individually tailored training for staff. This enables the staff team to best meet the young people's needs, for example as they express their emerging identity.

The registered manager routinely makes appropriate notifications of significant events to other agencies, including Ofsted. However, there have been examples of senior leaders instructing that significant events are not notified. This practice restricts Ofsted's ability to effectively monitor the home and it undermines the autonomy of the registered manager.

Lines of accountability and responsibility throughout the leadership team are not always followed in practice. On one occasion, the staff's management of an incident was undermined by a more senior manager who instructed staff to call the emergency services to manage the situation. On another occasion, a young person moved into the home without the registered manager's knowledge. Pre-admission procedures were not completed until after the young person arrived at the home. This means that there is the potential for other young people to be unsettled or affected should this practice be repeated. The likelihood of a possible reoccurrence is minimal, however, as the admission protocols has been agreed in line with the registered manager's responsibilities for the home. The registered manager now exercises discretion regarding the acceptance of a placement, and this is conditional on an impact assessment.

Senior leaders have made the decision to retain the 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 young person that identifies the safeguarding reasons that justify the use of CCTV. There is no regular review of its use and the young people's privacy is compromised.

On occasion, there is difficulty working in a team when senior leaders, who are not fully aware of each child's care plan, are in the home. Staff report that leaders have made ill-informed decisions as a result. On one occasion a senior manager exchanged text messages with young people but did not share the content of these with the registered manager. Such practice risks undermining the care planning process and could be confusing for the young people in their understanding of the respective roles of managers.

A member of staff said he gets good support and clear direction from the registered manager. This view is mirrored by other staff members who say that their line managers support them through the supervision and appraisal process.

The independent visitor provides good-quality monitoring. He reported on the safeguarding shortfalls in his October 2018 report, making a recommendation for improvement.

## **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:** SC485423

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

**Registered provider:** The Serendipity Centre Limited

**Registered provider address:** 1st Floor, Goodlands House, St. Lukes Close, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2US

**Responsible individual:** Susan Tinson

**Registered manager:** Carly Hodge

### Inspectors:

Keith Riley, Lead social care inspector  
Andy Whippey, Her Majesty's 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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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