

2743344

Registered provider: Serenity Care Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to three children aged from six to 17 years who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from careful planning before they move into the home. Moves to the home are spaced a few weeks apart. For one child, a football match with staff helped them to get to know the adults who would be caring for them and helped them to settle into the home. Consideration is given to the children already living in the home when new children move in. For example, the registered manager did not consider any new children over the Christmas period and is only now planning for another child to move into the home as the children currently living there are settled.

Children develop trusting relationships with staff. One child's social worker described staff as their child's 'safe people' who have been important in supporting them through some difficult issues in the short time they have been living in the home. She described communication with staff at the home as 'excellent'.

The home is spacious, comfortable and homely. A large open-plan kitchen and dining area is used for staff and children to eat together. Menus are planned with children which consider their likes and dislikes and encourage a healthy diet. The house is set in large grounds with space for children to play. There is a covered area outdoors, with a playhouse and a punchbag. This means that children can access the outside area, even in wet weather.

Two rescue ponies are central to the ethos of this home. Children are supported by staff to be involved with all aspects of their daily care. Children attend regular equine therapy sessions, which helps to develop their confidence and trust. Children speak warmly of the ponies and describe their different characters and personality traits. Caring for the ponies is a strong motivator for the children, with one child getting up on the morning of the inspection at 6.30am to support the ponies with a farrier appointment. The ponies' welfare is monitored by a national animal charity.

Children are encouraged to develop their interests and get involved in wider community activities, such as football clubs, Scouts and horse riding. Children who cannot swim are encouraged to attend swimming lessons, and one child has gone from being nervous in the water to being a confident swimmer. Photos are captured of special events, such as a trip to a premier league football stadium, Halloween celebrations and a visit to see Father Christmas.

Staff understand the importance of family time and make sensitive arrangements for children to spend time with their families in line with their care plans.

Staff support children to attend routine health appointments. A psychologist meets with staff monthly to support them in meeting the children's emotional needs.

Staff have been strong advocates for children when school places have not been found for them by their local authorities. Temporary arrangements for tutoring and education in the home for the children are now in place.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

There have been no incidents of children going missing from care. Policies are in place and staff understand what they should do if this was to happen.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and staff follow the guidance set out in these. Staff are skilled at balancing risk with the benefits of children enjoying activities such as ice skating and caring for the ponies.

There have been no safeguarding incidents or allegations made since the home opened. However, staff understand and can describe what they should do in the event of a concern.

Physical intervention is used extremely rarely and at a very low level. Records of any incidents are detailed and clear. The registered manager reviews these promptly to see if there is anything that can be learned for future practice.

Safer recruitment arrangements are in place to reduce the risk of an unsuitable person being employed in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Drawing on their joint extensive experience of working in residential care, an experienced leadership team, led by the registered manager, has given careful thought to the design of the premises and the principles of care that underpin practice in the home. Care and support for the staff team, to enable them to give the best care to children, are key to the registered manager's vision.

Induction processes are thorough, including for bank staff, and include shadow shifts to allow time for new members of the team to read policies and procedures and get to know the children. Staff speak positively about the training they received before starting in their roles, and less-experienced colleagues said that they receive support from the senior residential practitioners as well as the management team.

Children's views are central to their care and are reflected in individual 'you said, we did' documents. The children's guide is informative and includes lots of photos of the home, the grounds and the ponies. However, in some parts of the guide, the language used is not child friendly.

The registered manager has consciously over recruited to build the new staff team and to allow time for staff to undertake training and development before the home becomes fully occupied. One social worker described the staff team as 'warm and nurturing' and said that staff do a good job.

The registered manager knows the children and the staff team well and has a good oversight of practice in the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve? Recommendation

- The registered person should provide children living in the home with a guide that is written in a way that is age appropriate and accessible to them. It should be easy for children to understand and include an explanation of the daily routines and how to make a complaint ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4)

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: 2743344

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Serenity Care Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Tickhill Farm, Caverswall Common, Stoke-on-Trent
ST11 9EX

Responsible individual: Sandra Oulsnam

Registered manager: Alexander Hayward

Inspector

Janet Fraser, His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care

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