

1231812

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

There has not been a manager registered with Ofsted since July 2022. One manager was appointed but did not register with Ofsted. The current manager has been in post since February 2023 and is in the process of applying to register.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good
08/11/2018	Full	Good
23/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children have left the home since the previous inspection. Two children live here currently. The environment is homely and well furnished, and personalised pictures of the children are on display around the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their tastes, for example one child has a themed room based on their favourite cartoon characters.

Children are supported to feel as comfortable as possible when they move in or out of the home. When one child needed to move on from the home due to staff no longer being able to safely meet their needs, the home's therapist made sure that the child's complex needs were clearly shared with their new carers. Staff settled the child into their new home, and staff continue to maintain regular contact with the child over the phone when the child is struggling emotionally. After this child moved, the staff and management team held reflective practice discussions to understand what led to the child's well-being reaching crisis, to ensure that any learning from incidents was disseminated to develop the team's skills. This demonstrates a commitment to the child's journey and to understanding their experiences.

Staff regularly use creative methods to engage with children to both help them express themselves and to learn about topics which are relevant to their lives. Staff have completed posters and spent time with children looking at themes such as their sexual identity, internet safety, exploitation and the importance of maintaining their own mental health. This supports children's social and emotional development.

Staff support children effectively to make the most of their educational potential. The team regularly meets with professionals when attendance for children is difficult and try a variety of different ways to encourage children to enjoy education again, escalating difficulties with the local authority when required. This shows ongoing commitment to helping the child to make progress.

Children and staff benefit from ongoing consultations with the home's therapist. When children move in, their attachment needs over a 12-week period are assessed to help inform continued care planning. Children get specialist support with their mental health. The home's therapist has created safety plans with staff to ensure consistency in care. This demonstrates a prioritisation of children's mental health needs.

Managers respond to complaints from children in good timescales, but do not use this feedback to make improvements to care. When one child complained about restrictions which limit how they see their friends in the home, the manager did not listen effectively to the child's views. Limitations on how children can spend time with friends remained in place. This stops children from being able to enjoy normal friendships. This practice contrasts with the other aspects of loving care provided by staff.

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

Plans to support the staff in protecting children from harm are thorough, clear and regularly updated as information or children's needs change. This ensures that children are effectively safeguarded and their risks are well understood by the team.

Staff work together effectively and respond in an empathic way to children in self-harm incidents. Where there have been concerns for one child's emotional health, staff act quickly to safeguard the child. They regularly consult with other professionals to try to reduce the risk moving forward. This ensures that the child receives well-coordinated care that supports their emotional well-being.

Staff understand one child's potential risks around exploitation well. Staff are curious with the child, and work with other professionals to help them build a picture of any patterns which could suggest the child is at risk. On one occasion, when staff failed to follow a child's plan, managers took prompt action to provide staff with further training and supervision. This helps to continue to improve care.

Staff resolve conflicts with children effectively using restorative approaches and by building relationships. Restraint is used only when strictly necessary to keep children safe and has, therefore, been rare. All incidents are reviewed and monitored, and children are consulted and have opportunities to reflect afterwards with staff to help them feel listened to. Where recording in one incident lacked in clarity, managers recognised this and provided the team with further training.

When children go missing, staff engage the child's social network to help locate the child and promptly contact police when this is appropriate. However, on one occasion, staff did not look for a child themselves when they went missing, and in another incident staff failed to continue to search for the child when the child remained missing overnight. These shortfalls were not identified by leaders until the inspection. The responsible individual now recognises this issue and intends to conduct follow-up work with staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Management arrangements have changed several times since the last inspection. The home has not had a registered manager in post since July 2022. One manager was appointed and left the post without registering. Managers worked hard to reduce the delays in appointing a registered manager as much as possible. More recently, a new manager has been appointed who is well established in the home. They are in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Staff informed the inspector that they have found the last year difficult without the presence of a registered manager. Effective oversight from senior leaders and monthly consultations with the home's therapist and staff have, however, ensured consistent oversight of children's care in the interim. This ensured that staff responses to children remain skilled and practice is adequately quality assured.

Staff have positive relationships with one another, children's families and other professionals. One parent said the communication is good, and that, when their child has struggled with school, staff have persevered in trying to help them. Another professional praised the team's therapeutic approach towards understanding one child's needs, which helped the child to settle in.

Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care. The responsible individual has ensured that any learning through this monitoring is implemented in the absence of a registered manager.

Training and development of staff is effective. Staff receive regular, child-focused supervision. They also have monthly development days with the team's therapist which focus on how staff can meet the needs of the children. Staff respond to children in a therapeutic way, and staff speak about the children to others using the same loving approach. This shows that children's well-being is prioritised.

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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff follow plans to protect children when they go missing, specifically that staff ensure children are searched for and action is taken if a child could be at risk of harm.	12 April 2023

Recommendation

- The registered persons should ensure that staff support children to understand how to build friendships with other children. Children should be able to spend time with their friends in the local community, in their home area, and by having friends visit them at the home, in line with the child's plans, age and understanding. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.7)

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: 1231812

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Registered provider address: Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Timothy Kosmala

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Fiona Roche, Social Care Inspector

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