Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	**21/03/2017**
Unique reference number	**1231812**
Type of inspection	**Full**
Provision subtype	**Children's home**
Registered provider	**Meadows Care Ltd**
Registered provider address	**Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN**

Responsible individual	**Niel Shelmerdine**
Registered manager	**Marianne Eames**
Inspector	**Anna Rudge**

Inspection date	**21/03/2017**
Previous inspection judgement	**N/A**
Enforcement action since last inspection	**None**
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	**Good**
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	**Good**
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	**Good**

1231812

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Staff ensure that young people are safe through effective partnership working and detailed risk assessments.
- In-house care plans provide young people with an understanding about their placement and areas of progress. This supports young people's development and achievement.
- The registered manager has effective relationships with partnership agencies. Therefore, young people benefit from coordinated care and input.
- Staff encourage young people to develop their independent living skills. This means that young people are better equipped for the transition to adulthood and feel more confident.
- Young people have nurturing and stable relationships with staff. Consequently, young people are able to develop their relationships with others.
- There are some areas for improvement. These include the review of the use of bedroom door alarms, ensuring that young people consistently attend education and that incidents of physical restraint are accurately recorded.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
8. The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.	30/04/17
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(d))	30/04/17
The registered person must ensure that 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 all required information; and 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)(i-viii)(b)(i))	30/04/17

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out.

('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private provider owns and operates this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/09/2016	Registration	N/A

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	**Good**

Young people make good progress in all areas of their development. Their experience of the care provided is positive. Internal care planning processes are structured and well recorded. Staff complete internal placement plans to a high standard. These plans detail clear targets and enable staff to track young people's progress and achievements. Young people's internal care plans detail longer-term aims and mirror statutory care plans. This promotes good-quality and consistent care.

The registered manager and the staff team receive therapeutic advice and guidance from a clinical psychologist commissioned by the organisation. This supports their one-to-one work with young people. Individual therapeutic assessments and internal care plans support young people with their emotional and behavioural needs. Therefore, young people are able to improve their relationships with others from the guidance that staff provide.

The staff team has a thorough understanding of the needs of the young people that it cares for. Consequently, it is able to reassure and comfort young people when required, reducing their episodes of challenging behaviour. The positive relationships staff have built with young people are based around a restorative approach. This means that the young people feel safe and well cared for. They respect their home environment and have a positive sense of self-worth.

Attendance at education is generally good. Staff encourage young people to achieve academically and offer rewards for school attendance. Staff work in partnership with education professionals. This means that they meet young people's learning needs and address any issues, such as bullying. However, some young people do not consistently attend their education placements on time. Staff do not revise morning routines to support young people to reduce their late attendance. This potentially hinders young people's continuing educational success.

Young people attend routine health appointments and are able to access additional health services, such as sexual health advice centres and smoking cessation clinics. Staff help young people to maintain a healthy lifestyle with a nutritious diet and access to physical activity. This promotes young people's health and well-being and means that they understand potential long-term health risks.

Young people are encouraged to share their views about the care they receive in house meetings, individual sessions and through complaints forms. The registered manager listens to the young people and responds quickly to issues they raise.

Staff encourage young people to attend their statutory reviews or to contribute to these prior to the meeting. As a result, young people have a say in the care they receive. Young people are able to raise issues that matter to them, such as family contact, and contribute to the decisions made about them. One young person told the inspector, 'I have no issues with the staff and am more than able to speak up for myself. I am not scared to and I have an advocate.'

On a day-to-day basis, young people enjoy a number of activities and opportunities within the home. These include theme nights to explore other cultures and foods, movie nights, takeaway evenings and baking sessions. Young people enjoy time with their family, going out with friends, attending youth club, playing snooker, go-carting, going to the cinema and eating at a local dessert restaurant. Consequently, young people experience new opportunities, have fun and develop their independence positively.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	**Good**

Managers and staff work positively with health and education professionals, social workers and police to keep young people safe. Detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans enable staff to accurately assess the risks. Young people are encouraged to take positive risks and to travel independently when possible. Staff promote independence through assisting young people to access chosen activities, with curfew times, to build up trust and confidence.

Young people receive sanctions when they ignore their curfew times or do not behave appropriately. They understand the reasons for these sanctions and staff use debrief sessions to encourage young people to reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. This enables them to demonstrate more positive behaviours and improves their relationships. However, the majority of sanctions are not restorative in nature and focus on young people forsaking their activity money. This could further perpetuate challenging behaviours.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are low. Committed staff input has significantly reduced episodes of missing for one young person. This has meant that risks to child sexual exploitation have also decreased, keeping the young person safe from abuse. When young people do go missing, staff respond well. They follow procedures, look for young people and liaise with police. Staff explain the risks to police and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure that they return home promptly. This promotes young people's safety as well as demonstrating that staff care about them and want them to return. As a result, this

contributes to their emotional well-being and sense of positive identity.

The registered manager and staff use bedroom door alarms to monitor young people's movements. Staff do not adequately risk-asses the need to use these monitoring devices and there are no highlighted risks to young people's safety if they are not used. The use of these alarms is common practice in the home and infringes on young people's privacy without due reason. For example, door alarms sound when a young person uses the toilet at night.

All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint and on attachment, regulation and competency. This model of working helps staff to understand and respond to the behaviours that young people present. There have been 11 physical restraints since the service was registered. The reassuring relationships between staff and young people mean that staff are able to use distraction and de-escalation techniques. This reduces episodes of challenging behaviour and potential emotional distress for the young person. However, some incidents of physical restraint are not clearly accessible on the electronic system. These records do not consistently confirm that staff record all incidents within 24 hours and documents do not always include the views of young people after the incident. This means that appropriate records are not in place and this hinders the registered manager's ability to review this area of practice.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	**Good**

The registered manager registered with Ofsted in September 2016. She has experience of working in residential children's homes and holds the necessary qualifications that are required for this role. The registered manager is passionate about the care provided to young people. She supports the staff team to work consistently in providing guidance and boundaries to young people. The registered manager prioritises the needs of young people and actively challenges ineffective responses from others if this is required.

Young people are making good and steady progress across all areas of their development and from their starting points. Young people are making progress in forming safe relationships, in their independence and in developing their confidence and self-esteem. The registered manager and staff team track young people's progress through in-house placement plans and independent-living folders. This means that the registered manager continually reviews young people's needs, and ensures that their achievements are well documented, with photographs for future reference.

The staff team feels supported and listened to by its manager. A member of staff told the inspector, 'She is great and really supportive. She listens to you and is approachable.' The staff team receives a thorough induction programme, assisted by a good quality and diverse training programme. This means that staff are well trained and equipped to meet the needs of young people. The registered manager also ensures that staff receive regular, good quality supervision and appraisal to maintain a good level of care. Not all staff have the recognised qualification in children's social care. However, those without the qualification are undertaking this course and are within the timescales required to complete this.

The registered manager works hard to maintain and develop relationships with families and welcomes parents to the home. This means that young people feel settled and contented with the care they receive. The staff team works effectively with social workers and education professionals to challenge decisions made about young people and to improve their situations. A social worker told the inspector, 'This is one of the best homes I have seen, I am very impressed. I feel listened to, staff take on board my views and really work with me. There is good communication between us.' The staff team has made good links with the police who visit the home, talk to young people and assist staff in keeping them safe. This multi-agency approach means that the aims and objectives within the statement of purpose are met.

The registered manager is able to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the care provided. Monitoring tools are in place to evaluate the quality of care provided to young people to analyse the impact on their progress. The registered manager is working with staff to identify patterns and trends relating to the quality of care that young people receive. This is positively improving the impact that the service has on young people's development.

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What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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