1231812

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 October 2017

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: 21 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Managers and staff use bespoke one-to-one sessions to help young people to take responsibility for their actions and reflect on their behaviours.
- Young people are safe in the home because staff know and understand young people's vulnerabilities and work in partnership with other agencies to reduce these risks.
- Internal care planning processes consistently include and reflect young people's views, wishes, thoughts and feelings.
- Staff receive good quality, regular and practice-related formal supervision. This supports their learning and development. Training courses reflect young people's individual needs.
- Staff prioritise young people's education and this supports young people's learning.
- In-house psychology services provide young people with prompt access to specialist emotional support when they need it.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager does not always challenge other professionals or agencies effectively to make sure that they meet young people's needs.
- Staff do not ensure that young people's case files include all the necessary documents and records to support young people's progress.
- Staff do not always make sure that as young people move towards independence they have appropriate plans in place.
- The registered manager does not consistently and promptly notify Ofsted of significant events in the home.
- The registered manager does not always keep clear records in relation to the conclusion of all safeguarding referrals.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2017	Full	Good

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(c))	29/12/2017
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b))	29/12/2017
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34(2)(d))	29/12/2017
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child, which include the information, and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	29/12/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(c))	29/12/2017
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular,	29/12/2017

the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b)(7)(a))	

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people's overall and day-to-day experience of living in the home is positive and they are making good progress. Managers and staff work in partnership with the placing authority, young people, their families and specialist agencies. These relationships enable staff to provide personalised care that supports and reflects young people's many and often complex needs. Nevertheless, staff do not always make sure that young people's case files and records include all necessary information and documentation. For some young people this reduces the effectiveness of this collective approach.

Relationships between young people and staff are mainly positive. One young person said, 'The staff really care about me, but it's taken me a while to realise it.' Staff use these relationships to encourage young people to engage in one-to-one sessions. The aim of these sessions is to help young people to celebrate their achievements, review their progress and reflect on their unacceptable or risk-taking behaviours. Staff embed this collaboration and consultation into the internal care planning process. Consequently, young people's views and wishes are considered and they have the opportunity to comment on the quality of care that they receive.

Young people assist staff with planning menus and young people enjoy a balanced and healthy diet. Staff encourage young people to participate in safe and regular physical exercise. When young people's lifestyle choices are detrimental to their safety and well-being, staff work with specialist agencies, such as substance and alcohol misuse services. As a result, young people have easy access to relevant and up-to-date information regarding the dangers of substance and alcohol misuse, and the longer-term negative impact that this may have on their health and welfare. The organisation operates an in-house clinical psychology service to assess and support young people's emotional well-being. Allocated psychologists work in partnership with staff, the placing authority and young people's families, when appropriate, to provide bespoke support and clinical assessment. Consequently, young people do not experience any delays in accessing the services that they need to promote their development.

Staff prioritise young people's education and learning. They work with the virtual school, mainstream and specialist education providers and allocated teaching staff to assess young people's learning needs. As a result, young people begin to recognise the importance of education and the positive impact that this has on their development. For most young people, their school attendance is good and improving, taking account of

their starting points. Staff also support young people to embrace other opportunities, such as apprenticeships. This enables young people to consider future employment options.

Transition planning and supporting young people to gain the necessary emotional and practical skills that they need to live independently are core aims of the service. However, although internal support plans reflect young people's abilities, there is a lack of formal arrangements with the placing authority. Young people who are due to leave the home in the coming weeks do not yet know where they will move to or when. As a result, young people experience feelings of anxiety and unnecessary trepidation.

Staff help young people to maintain regular contact with their families when this is safe and appropriate. They provide practical and emotional support to maintain and develop these relationships. This means that young people are not isolated from those who are important to them.

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

Managers and staff work in partnership with the placing authority, specialist police teams and other dedicated agencies to protect young people and promote their safety. When young people struggle to recognise or understand that some of the relationships that they have with others are abusive, staff seek guidance from key professionals and support services. For example, if a young person's risk of child sexual exploitation is high, staff ensure that they refer all concerning incidents or events to the relevant safeguarding team. Together with these professionals, managers and staff develop prevention and risk reduction strategies to protect young people from harm. Staff undertake one-to-one work with young people to supplement these support strategies. These sessions help young people to grow in confidence and self-esteem and encourage them to make good decisions that keep them safe.

There have been a number of incidents when young people have been missing from the home, although the frequency of these is reducing. In these circumstances, staff work with local police teams, and other agencies, to locate young people. Staff are tenacious in contacting young people, their friends, families and known acquaintances to encourage young people to return to the home and to keep themselves safe.

Staff recognise that some young people may be at risk of radicalisation. They work in close partnership with specialist anti-terrorism and prevention agencies. These partnerships equip staff with the skills they need to identify when young people may be susceptible to extreme views, and take action to reduce these risks.

Young people benefit from behaviour management plans that balance rewards and incentives with clear expectations and boundaries. This approach enables young people to visualise their progress and encourages them to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, young people learn to consider how their behaviours may affect themselves and others.

Staff undertake regular training in the use of physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. The use of physical restraint remains rare and staff only use this measure of control as a last resort to protect young people from harm. Staff record all incidents of physical restraint in detail and young people have the opportunity to reflect on what has happened. The registered manager reviews these records to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of physical restraint and to ensure that this is necessary and proportionate. This promotes young people's safety in the home. Since the last inspection, there has been a noticeable increase in the use of restorative work with young people. This improvement enables staff to support young people to take responsibility for their actions.

Young people say that they understand how to make a complaint and have previously used this process to raise concerns. The registered manager provides young people with a formal written response to any issues that they raise. This gives young people confidence in this procedure. In addition, the registered manager keeps detailed records of all referral documents relating to the management of allegations. The relationship between the service and the local authority designated officer is positive. However, there is one occasion when safeguarding records do not demonstrate that an allegation of harm was concluded appropriately, because the young person moved to an alternative placement. Furthermore, on two occasions the registered manager failed to notify Ofsted of significant events, within a suitable timescale. Although these shortfalls are not detrimental to young people currently residing in the home, they contravene internal and regulatory safeguarding procedures.

Although young people say that they do not believe that bullying is an issue in the home, there are recorded incidents when young people have tried to intimidate members of staff. On these occasions, senior staff undertake reflective one-to-one sessions with young people. These sessions help young people to develop compassion and consideration for others.

Staff undertake regular fire checks and health and safety checks. The home is well decorated, comfortable and welcoming. This means that young people live in a suitable and safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has experience of working in and managing residential care services for children and young people. She holds some relevant qualifications for this role and is currently completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

Young people make good progress from their starting points because the registered manager prioritises their needs. She makes sure that meeting these needs and supporting young people's development is central to the routines in the home. The registered manager retains a good overview of young people's behaviours, vulnerabilities and risks, and considers these against the aims and objectives of their support plans. She uses this information to monitor the quality of care the service provides as well as

young people's individual and collective progress. In addition to internal monitoring systems, the registered manager makes sure that she incorporates young people's views and opinions when completing the quality of care review. An independent visitor also visits the home each month to assess the service. However, the quality of the reports that the visitor writes is variable. Furthermore, these reports are not sent to Ofsted within acceptable timescales.

Partnership working arrangements between the service, the placing authority and other external agencies are generally very positive. One social worker said, 'This home is great, one of the best I've seen. I think it all comes down to the manager and how she runs the service. She is so committed.' Nevertheless, the registered manager does not always challenge others effectively when their actions fall short of acceptable standards. This potentially leads to delays in young people accessing the support that they need when preparing to move on from the home to independence.

Staff are motivated and enthusiastic. They benefit from good quality and regular formal supervision. During supervision sessions, the registered manager supports staff to review their performance and reflect on their own practice. Furthermore, she utilises team meetings to debate practice issues, share information and test the staff's knowledge. Training programmes equip staff with the skills that they need to support young people. These programmes also reflect the young people's individual needs. All eligible staff either already hold the qualifications required for their role or are working towards achieving these. This means that young receive support from capable and experienced staff.

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: 1231812

Provision sub-type: 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

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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