

1241855

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Staff do not continually promoted young people's safety. This is because they do not adequately review risk assessments to manage or reduce known risks.
- The registered manager does not review or reflect on significant incidents and events to shape the development of the service.
- Staff do not seek young people's views or opinions in relation to the quality of care that they receive.
- Young people do not benefit from individualised care that reflects their personal circumstances and experiences. This is because not all staff are fully aware of young people's backgrounds.
- The registered manager does not ensure that young people's case files include all of the necessary information and documentation.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff continually promote and encourage young people's achievements and celebrate their educational successes. This instils a learning culture in the home.
- Staff ensure that young people maintain regular and positive contact with their families. They provide young people with practical and emotional support to further these relationships.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(1)(b) and (2)(b)(iv))	11/08/2017
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7(1)(c) and (2)(a)(iv))	11/08/2017
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make	11/08/2017

arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account feedback on the experiences of children. (Regulation 13(1)(b) and (2)(a)(c)(g)(ii))	11/08/2017
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 the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; 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 signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(vii)(b)(ii)(c))	11/08/2017
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))	11/08/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that records are kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36 (schedule 3(14))). Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

Inspection judgements

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

Staff do not make sure that young people's care always reflects their individual needs or personal circumstances. For example, not all staff are fully aware of young people's backgrounds or previous experiences. This means that staff are unable to shape young people's care to promote their individual needs and emotional well-being. Staff do not make sure that internal care and support plans include all relevant information. Consequently, young people do not always receive bespoke emotional support that takes account of their history and upbringing.

Managers and staff do not make sure that young people's case files include all necessary information or documentation. For example, up-to-date placing authority care plans detailing the objectives of the placement are not available in some young people's case files. This means that staff are unable to verify that the internal support plans that they devise reflect the wider or longer-term objectives of the placing authority. Furthermore, missing records and documents mean that staff do not have a sufficient overview of some young people's individual needs. This potentially limits young people's progress and development and is detrimental to their day-to-day experience.

Young people have good relationships with staff and say that they feel that staff care about them. Staff support young people to attend their review meetings and endeavour to involve them in decisions about their care, both now and in the future. One young person said, 'I can talk to most of the staff. They listen to the things I say about what I want and talk to my social worker about it.' Although the relationships between young people and staff are generally positive, the quality of one-to-one sessions is poor. These meetings are mostly general conversations, and are not reflective of the more specific aims of the placement. This is a missed opportunity to help young people to learn ways of managing their frustrations and anxieties, and to personalise the care that young people receive. In addition, staff do not discuss with young people what they think about the quality of care provided by the service. This lack of consultation means that young people are not always involved in the ongoing development of the home.

The organisation provides in-house therapy services as and when young people need this support. On admission to the home, qualified practitioners assess young people's emotional and psychological needs and, when necessary, provide tailored sessions to reflect these needs. The home has good links with local primary health care services. This means that young people benefit from easy access to the physical and emotional health services they may need.

Staff continually promote the importance of education and all current young people have school placements. Young people's attendance is generally good and they understand the positive impact regular school attendance has on their future career aims and ambitions. When young people face barriers to education, or are unable to progress their learning, staff work in partnership with allocated teaching staff. These relationships

mean that together, care staff and education professionals are able to identify young people's additional support needs and introduce plans to meet these needs. This approach promotes young people's learning.

Young people currently living in the home are not at a stage of preparing to move towards independence. However, staff continually encourage young people to participate in general household chores. This helps young people to develop new skills and take pride in their surroundings.

Staff develop appropriate relationships with young people's families. They make sure that they follow the contact arrangements as specified by the placing authority, and provide young people with practical and emotional support in these circumstances. Staff encourage young people to maintain regular contact with their families, and to make appropriate friendships in the local community. Young people are not isolated from their families or their peers because staff help them to develop the social skills they need to further these relationships. This promotes young people's self-esteem and confidence.

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

Young people currently living in the home are safe and say that they feel safe. They do not identify bullying as an issue and say that although on occasions they fall out, they soon 'make up'. During regular young people's meetings, staff discuss bullying and the impact this behaviour can have on others. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the home opened in January 2017.

Staff work with young people, their social workers and their families to identify possible risks that may place young people at risk of harm. However, for some young people, these risk assessments lack sufficient detail. This is because they do not enable staff to assess fully the potential impact that highlighted risk factors may have on young people's welfare and well-being. For example, when young people display aggressive or violent behaviours, the longer-term consequences that these types of behaviour may have on their development are not included in risk assessments or risk management plans.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are limited to a young person who has now left the service. On these occasions, staff worked with the young person's family, the placing authority and local police officers. Together they considered increased risks of sexual exploitation, and put plans in place to try to locate the young person quickly. However, staff failed to review or update missing-from-home risk assessments following these episodes. For example, the risk assessment completed on admission remained in place, with very few amendments, until the young person moved from home. This was despite an increasing number of concerning incidents of anti-social behaviour, violence and aggression. As a result, staff did not make sure that risk-reduction strategies accurately reflected the young person's complex behaviours. Furthermore, records relating to missing-from-home episodes did not include all of the necessary information and managers failed to evaluate effectively these records to

identify any gaps in staff knowledge or skills. This shortfall limits the capacity for the home to improve this area of practice.

Staff complete training in the use of physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. The use of this measure of control is rare and it is only used to prevent young people from hurting themselves and/or others. Staff use an electronic system to report and record incidents of physical restraint and sanctions. However, some of these records do not include an assessment of the effectiveness of the measures used and the registered manager does not always verify these reports. Furthermore, records do not show that senior staff or managers seek young people's views and opinions. This lack of oversight potentially compromises young people's safety in the home.

Staff regularly refresh their safeguarding training. This training includes modules on child protection, safeguarding legislation, the management of allegations, child sexual exploitation, bullying, e-safety and radicalisation. When appropriate, staff share their learning with the young people. For example, some young people complete worksheets around the government's 'Prevent' strategy. This approach ensures that staff knowledge is up to date and that young people have an increased awareness of possible risks to their safety.

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

Ofsted registered the home in January 2017. This is the first inspection of the service since registration. The registered manager has a number of years of experience of working with young people and holds relevant qualifications for this role including a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

The statement of purpose details the underlying therapeutic ethos of the service. This is to ensure that young people receive the personalised care and attention that they need to reach their full potential. This ethos remains in its infancy and the registered manager has yet to embed this into the day-to-day routines in the home. For example, although the registered manager has a good understanding of young people's specific needs, some staff are unaware of the details of young people's backgrounds. This shortfall means that young people do not always receive the tailored care that they need to support their emotional well-being and development.

Staff receive regular and practice-related formal supervision. However, some staff say that the registered manager does not support or encourage them. This means that the registered manager does not currently instil a culture in the staff team that replicates the aims, ethos and philosophy of the statement of purpose. Training programmes help staff to appreciate the range of complex behaviours that young people may present. However, the majority of staff do not hold a relevant qualification and have little or no experience of working in children's residential care. This means that staff may not have the skills and knowledge that they require to meet young people's needs.

Partnership working arrangements between the registered manager, the placing authority and other professionals are generally appropriate. One social worker said, 'I

think the home is providing my young person with a good service. I can see he is making progress and is more settled.'

The home has been operational for six months and the registered manager has devised a range of monitoring systems to assess and review the quality of care provided by the service. The registered manager is in the process of evaluating this information to identify the strengths and weakness of the service. However, there are a number of missed opportunities, following significant events, to review staff practice or to learn from and reflect upon these incidents. This means that when developing good practice in the home, the registered manager does not take account of feedback on young people's experiences.

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 difference 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 who 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: 1241855

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: Kerry Ewers

Inspector

Jo Stephenson: social care inspector

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