

# 1241855

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is one of four operated under a contract with a large local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who may have experienced trauma and/or placement and/or family breakdown.

The organisation's clinical psychologist provides a service to staff and children.

The manager has been registered since January 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 10 July 2018

**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:** 20 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 20/02/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 07/06/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home;</p> <p>and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(ii)(c))</p> <p>This is in relation to making a formal contribution to the review of the child's local authority care plan and demonstrating managerial tracking of the child's progress towards the outcomes and aims of the placement.</p> | 31/10/2018 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>                                                                                                                     | 31/10/2018 |

## Recommendations

- Ensure the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

Specifically, that children's records are accurate, up to date, reflect their individuality and are useful to them in understanding their journey in care.

- Make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. The manager should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Support children to understand how to build friendships with other children. They 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)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Although one child's placement ended when the service could no longer meet their needs, the service is increasingly providing children with stability. Two new children are settling into their lives at the home. One social worker told the inspector, 'My young person has only been there a short time. However, staff have been very supportive of her and helped her to engage in education on-site while an education provision was identified. She has started to build up a relationship with staff and she likes it there.'

Two other children have lived here for over a year. Most children have a goal to move to foster care. One child has made firm plans to stay here until he is 18. He is moving on well with his preparation for independence, including doing well at college.

Staff have an active parenting style. Regular, imaginative direct work by key workers makes sure that children talk about and learn strategies to become more resilient and

safer. The support to staff and children from the organisation's psychology service means that children do not wait if they need support with their social and emotional well-being.

Children get the help that they need to keep in touch with their families. One child has started to do some basic life story work with their key worker to help make sense of their past. Staff continually promote and encourage young people's achievements and help them with their disappointments and frustrations.

Good daily routines and structure help to make sure that children get up and go to school or their alternative education provision on time. However, not all children are in full-time education. The manager works well with the virtual school to ensure that delays in education and healthcare planning are minimised. One education professional praised the staff for their contribution in moving forward one child's plan for education. The home has been instrumental in assisting through this.

Children lead healthy lives. They eat well and learn to shop and cook for themselves and others when they are old enough. Children enjoy constructive leisure activities and hobbies. One young person has developed great links with city sports events and has volunteered there. This has opened horizons for him. Younger children go out and about in the community with staff. However, children miss out on the opportunity to develop ordinary friendships because they do not go to school full time or become members of clubs or have independent leisure activities.

A positive feature of life at the home is the way that children settle happily to bed each night. Staff help them to wind down, make hot chocolate, go upstairs and prepare for a good night's sleep. One child can be anxious at night but spoke of how he enjoyed the evening 'debriefs' when staff sit in his bedroom and talk to him about his day. He said that he enjoyed asking the adults how their day had been too. This is an excellent opportunity for building trust, developing relationships and encouraging children to communicate about their feelings.

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

Regular child protection training, clear procedures and safely recruited staff help to keep children safe from abuse, exploitation or extremism. Constructive relationships between the manager and the local safeguarding officer result in clear understanding about thresholds for referral. There have been no allegations or complaints about staff practice.

Conflict between different children in the house does continue to be something that can cause unhappiness. However, staff and the manager have good relationships with children and talk through these issues with them, keeping them safe and secure from bullying.

Staff assess and manage risk to make sure that children who run away from the home are safe on their return, or when they make or hide weapons. Staff demonstrate active

care and act as good parents to share information with the police and safeguarding professionals when necessary.

Physical intervention is a last resort. Staff work in a restorative approach that is based on positive relationships, open communication and expectations of mutual respect. Children have very regular opportunities to talk to staff after incidents, but this is not always specifically about their experience of a restraint or with someone not involved in the incident. This means that they may not feel that they can talk openly.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is an effective, qualified and experienced leader. She consults with children, resolves their issues, promotes partnership working with professionals and families and is a lively presence in the home for staff and children. She also challenges when other services fall short.

Despite internal and external monitoring, staff do not always have the most up-to-date local authority care planning documents on which to base their work or to help them to define the purpose of the placement. Also, the manager does not consistently implement systems for tracking progress. For example, staff do not always make a formal contribution to the review of the child's care by the placing authority. This is a missed opportunity to reflect every six months on progress against the aims of the placement.

There is not currently a management review after children's unplanned placement endings to learn lessons so that improvements can be made for future placement stability. The manager also does not ensure that the six-monthly review of the quality of care helps to identify further improvement for the home. This is a missed opportunity to develop the service.

In-house care planning records are not always clear, up to date or presented in a meaningful format for children. Other records are duplicated and some unnecessary records are not unique to them because some contain the initials or names of other children. This careless recording does not respect their individuality.

The diverse staff team members are positive role models for children. They are enthusiastic about their work with children and appreciative of the manager's approach. A good programme of staff training ensures that staff have the skills that are tailored to children's needs and the aims of the home. The placing authority praises the 'can do' attitude of the staff and manager.

## **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:** 1241855

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Meadows Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Meadows Care Limited, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

**Responsible individual:** Niel Shelmerdine

**Registered manager:** Kerry Ewers

## Inspector

Christy Wannop: social care inspector



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