

1241855

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Interim 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 homes 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 multiple moves.

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

The manager in day-to-day charge of the home since February 2019 has yet to apply to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 21 March 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 9 July 2018

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

The registered manager left the service in December 2018. A temporary manager took over the day-to-day running of the home at that time. A new manager took up post in February 2019. She has yet to apply to register with Ofsted.

Ofsted raised two requirements and three recommendations at the last inspection. Managers have failed to take sufficient action to address these shortfalls. Consequently, children do not receive consistently good care that supports their progress and development. The new manager is starting to address matters, but these interventions are in their infancy.

Managers across the organisation do not respond to all allegations of abuse or harm in line with internal and statutory safeguarding procedures. The organisation has failed to properly investigate an allegation of abuse. This matter remains unresolved. Records of actions taken to date are inconsistent and contradictory. Although this is now being addressed by the organisation, failing to respond promptly and effectively to an allegation of abuse compromises children's safety. The new manager in day-to-day charge of the home now refers and investigates all concerns as required.

Staff do not consistently contribute to children's statutory care plans or reviews. This shortfall means that managers are unable to track children's progress towards achieving their personal goals or the aims and objectives of the placing authority.

Partnerships between the service and the placing authority are weak. For example, managers are aware of the responsibilities of the placing authority and other professionals to support children's moves towards independence. However, when the actions of others fall short of acceptable standards, managers do not challenge these agencies to ensure that they deliver the services children need to progress. This is detrimental to children's next steps.

Children say that they like living in the home. They say that they have 'mostly good' relationships with staff. However, staff do not use these relationships to help children to reflect on, and create reminders of, their time in the home. For example, staff do not compile meaningful memory boxes with and for children. This is a missed opportunity to support children to understand their journeys into adulthood.

Staff remain unaware of the breadth and range of local facilities and community groups that children can access. This means that children do not have the opportunity to build friendships with other children to widen their social circles or to learn new skills.

Managers do not adequately monitor the service. For example, the quality of staff recording in restraint documents remains variable. Also, staff do not consistently seek children's views or comments following the use of this measure of control. Managers have failed to identify these shortfalls and consequently have taken insufficient action to improve these, or other, areas of practice.

Since the last inspection there have been many changes to the staff team. Several new, inexperienced and unqualified staff now work in the home. Managers do not ensure that they rota a balance of qualified, skilled and experienced staff to work alongside these new staff. This variation in skills means that children do not benefit from a consistent approach to meeting their needs.

There is a general lack of attention to the quality of fixtures and fittings in the home. For example, some children's bedrooms contain broken and damaged furniture. Staff have not taken action to replace this furniture. This means that children do not live in a well-maintained or comfortable home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2018	Full	Good
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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and 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(a)(c))	06/05/2019
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and 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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i))	06/05/2019
The leadership and management standard is that the registered	06/05/2019

person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)) In particular, ensure that duty rotas provide a balance of skilled, qualified and experienced staff on each shift to support for inexperienced, unqualified and probationary staff members.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	06/05/2019
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(b)(ii)(c)) This is in relation to making a formal contribution to the review of the children's local authority care plan and demonstrating managerial tracking of the children's progress towards the outcomes and aims of the placement.	06/05/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34(1)(a)(b)) This is with specific reference to the consistent implementation	06/05/2019

of this policy.	
The registered person must ensure that 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; and 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)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	06/05/2019

Recommendations

- 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)
- Ensure that 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 journeys in care.

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector
Patrick McIntosh, social care inspector

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