

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC065189
Inspector	Ceri Evans
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Meadows Care Limited
Registered person address	Egerton House Wardle Road ROCHDALE Lancashire OL12 9EN
Responsible individual	Niel David Shelmerdine
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	07/10/2014

Inspection date	06/02/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

This inspection focused on the progress made by the home since the last full inspection in October 2014 when the overall judgement was outstanding. No requirements were made at the last inspection. Evidence gathered at this inspection indicates that the home has not made sufficient progress. Shortfalls have been identified in relation to behaviour management, supervision, monitoring of young people and the quality of records. Therefore, relative to the previous judgement of outstanding the home has declined in its effectiveness.

All young people are either at school or college, and for some this is a significant improvement in their situation prior to their admission to this home. Some young people have made exceptional progress in their education and have narrowed the gap between their achievements and those of their peers. This is evidenced in the positive examination results and progress they have made. However, more recently, as a result of risk taking behaviour, some young people have experience disruption to their education. Staff have made every effort to challenge barriers and promote young peoples' participation. The home has a clear expectation that young people attend school and support is in place for them to do so. This means that young people are more likely to achieve better prospects in their education through continued support.

Young people benefit from living in a home where they are encouraged to develop appropriate life skills to their age and level of understanding. The progress they have made in relation to their independence is excellent. They enjoy a full range of experiences that further enhance their life skills and social experiences. For example young people learn how to budget, cook meals and do their own laundry. They are also active participants within the community. This level of engagement contributes positively to young people's social skills and confidence. Furthermore, this enables them to develop the necessary emotional and practical skills as they transition to

independence.

Face to face Contact arrangements with families are safe, well organised and supported by staff. Staff work closely with families to help build relationships and ensure that young people enjoy meaningful contact. For example, staff facilitate contact in young people's local areas. Contact is important as it ensures young people maintain relationships with those who are important to them. However, there have been occasions whereby young people have had unsupervised contact with family, friends and unknown individuals via social media and mobile phones. This has had a detrimental impact on the stability of their placement. Current arrangements for mobile phone use are unclear, there are no formal agreements or risk assessment in place to support staff intervention. This means that inappropriate use of mobile phones seriously undermines young people's safety and protection.

Most young people do not place themselves at risk by going missing. Those who are in long term placements are extremely settled and are now making better choices in relation to their personal safety. The home has clear procedures for reporting and recording instances when young people go missing and staff have effective links with the local police and missing from care co-ordinator to ensure the safe return of young people. However, in recent months there has been a sudden increase in missing from care incidents, these relate to one young person. Every attempt is made to locate young people and a return home interview is undertaken by an independent person. This encourages dialogue and reflection in the aim that young people make safer choices.

Young people's positive behaviour is promoted by staff who follow their individual behaviour management plans and risk assessments. However, this is not without its challenges, particularly when certain risky behaviours present themselves. In recent months relationships within the home have come under strain. Behaviour management strategies and supervision of young people have not been robust enough. There have been incidents of physical aggression between residents and one recorded incident of an undetected visitor in the home. Insufficient levels of supervision and monitoring means that vulnerable young people are at risk of being exposed to people who may pose a risk to them. This seriously compromises young people's safety.

Generally, records are well maintained and recorded to a high standard. Files are well organised and offer a good overall picture of young people's experiences and progress. There are some shortfalls in relation to record keeping. These relate to sanction records, they do not inform on the effectiveness of the measure, nor are young people's views routinely recorded. This does not make clear the impact of the intervention and does not confirm young people's thoughts about sanctions.

Since the last inspection a new manager has been appointed and the registration process is underway. He has worked in social care for many years and has previous

management experience. Staff comment that they feel supported and have access to regular training and supervision. The manager, deputy manager and senior support workers undertake staff supervision. However, not all supervision records are consistently signed by the supervisor and supervisee. This means that records do not demonstrate that staff have regular opportunities to formally reflect upon their practice.

The Manager makes good use of monitoring and quality assurance systems which focus on improved outcomes for young people. Regulation 33 visits are regularly carried out. However, the reports do not provide detailed evaluation of the care practices within the home. This means that there is no clear overview of the care provided in order to routinely enhance practice. In general, significant events are appropriately reported to Ofsted in the required timescales. However, there has been at least one occasion of a delay in notifying Ofsted. This hinders the regulator from effectively carrying out its safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that young people are protected from harm.

To conclude, whilst young people benefit from being cared for by a committed, stable staff team and some continue to make good progress, others have not due to an increase in risk taking behaviour. There have been some significant shortfalls in relation to safeguarding. Three requirements and four recommendations have been made as part of this inspection to ensure that young people are kept safe and can expect achieve their full potential.

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/10/2014	Full	outstanding
22/01/2014	Interim	good progress
30/05/2013	Full	outstanding
20/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the effectiveness and any consequence of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B(3)(f))	13/03/2015
11 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to, make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there. This specifically relates to ensuring that a risk management plan is in place for the use of mobile phones, particularly where there are known safeguarding concerns. (Regulation 11 (a))	13/03/2015
11	The registered person shall ensure that the	13/03/2015

(2001)	children's home is conducted so as to, make proper provision for the supervision and support of children accommodated there. This specifically relates to ensuring appropriate, and agreed levels of supervision of young people at all times. (Regulation 11 (b))	
--------	---	--

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that where sanctions are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- A written record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of supervision held for each member of staff. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS19.5)
- Visits of the home under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance. Specifically ensure that the reports demonstrate that the visitor is satisfied that the home has an effective approach to behaviour management and missing from home reports (NMS 21.7)
- The registered person has a system in place to notify within 24hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. The system include what to do where a notifiable event arises at weekends. (NMS 24.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.