

SC066560

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run and is registered to provide care for up to three children. The home's statement of purpose states that it provides support, assessment and therapeutic intervention for children in need of short-, medium- and long-term care.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021. We last visited this setting on 17 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	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: 12 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2019	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/07/2018	Full	Good
15/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

The progress that children make through living at the home is variable. For example, staff have not been able to sustain one child's attendance at school, and this has continued to decrease over time. One social worker commented: 'Her educational outcomes are looking poor.'

Staff are not successful in consistently maintaining all children's engagement with the support offered. As a result, some children refuse to engage with staff about their behaviour or disregard the advice that is offered by staff. A requirement made at the monitoring visit in respect of this has not been met and has been restated.

Children's time with their families is fully supported by the staff. As a result, some children have benefited from increased levels of contact and improved relationships with family members. Staff work proactively and positively with parents.

Staff offer patient care that over time enables some children to begin to trust staff and talk about their worries or concerns. Staff encourage children to engage in a variety of activities to help build relationships and support children's social development.

Children are supported to learn and practise skills they will need in adulthood. For example, some children are engaged in independence work that includes managing a weekly food budget, shopping and regularly preparing evening meals.

All children have access to regular therapeutic support from the home's therapist. Some children benefit from this intervention.

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

On the whole, children do not go missing from home. When incidents do occur, staff are proactive in following and trying to keep in contact with children. Staff liaise with the police and appropriately follow children's missing-from-home protocols. On some occasions, however, staff have not made comprehensive records of their actions. For example, on one occasion, an address was not recorded, and this later hindered staff in locating the child.

A child spoken to said she felt safe at the home and trusted the staff. A social worker, commenting about another child, said: 'Staff know what to do, and [they] keep her safe.'

Staff are not always effective in enabling all children to show respect or courtesy to staff. For example, when incidents have occurred in the home, some children have refused to discuss the incidents with staff.

Staff have not effectively engaged children in exploring risks associated with child exploitation and drug misuse. This is particularly important for some children who are identified as being vulnerable to these risks.

Work completed by staff with children is reactive to events and, in the main, not planned or reviewed. Managers are aware of this shortfall and have developed systems to commence evaluation of approaches employed by staff.

Staff work hard and are effective in de-escalating incidents that occur in the home, and physical restraint is rarely used.

Complaints and allegations made about staff are rare. When they have been made, managers respond appropriately and in a timely manner in order to address the concerns.

The manager has not always fully considered the risks that some children new to the home may pose to children already living at the home.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in manager. During the transition period, staff were for a period without a permanent manager. Since her appointment, the manager has worked hard to establish her leadership. Staff spoken to were highly complimentary about the manager.

Since September 2020, there have been significant staff changes and frequent use of non-core staff. The manager is aware of this, and, over the last six months, changes to the staff team have stabilised. However, this positive trend needs to embed, and a requirement made at the last inspection is restated.

A requirement made at the monitoring visit has not been met. This related to reviewing staff practice and the effectiveness of their work with children. The manager has very recently commenced this monitoring, and the results of such are yet to be measured. This requirement is therefore restated.

Although staff are trained in identifying and dealing with the issues, risks and dangers involved in drug misuse and child exploitation, they do not employ these skills to explore with children the risks identified in assessments. Staff have not availed themselves of the additional information that the manager has made available on these subjects.

The manager knows the children well and is aware of the variable progress that some children have made. She has requested planning meetings and has recently met with the school to address the child's non-engagement in education.

Staff spoken to feel supported by the manager, and they receive regular supervision. Staff are further supported through regular consultation with the home's therapist and discussion regarding children's emotional needs.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)) This specifically relates to the registered person monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of work with children, and staff having the knowledge and skills to address children's needs. In addition, that staff are trained and are confident in addressing drug misuse and criminal child exploitation.	30 April 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	30 April 2022

that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v(vi)(viii)(x)) This particularly relates to staff demonstrating understanding and skills to speak to children about their behaviour, relationships with staff and incidents that occur. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
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— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e))	30 April 2022

This specifically relates to the provider ensuring stability of core and casual staff employed within the home. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child overcome any such barriers. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)) This particularly relates to staff effectively supporting children to return to and participate in education on a regular basis.	30 April 2022
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 arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This specifically relates to impact risk assessments taking into account all known risks and behaviours of a child and the impact on other children already living in the home.	30 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff make comprehensive records when children go missing from the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand and can meet children's needs and that records made by staff reflect the work completed with children, that this work is planned and reviewed, and considers advice from the home's therapist. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC066560

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Registered provider address: Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale, Lancashire
OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Karen Brandon

Registered manager: Emma Fletcher

Inspector

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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