

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC066560
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Meadows Care Ltd
Registered provider address	Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual	Niel Shelmerdine
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Rebecca Quested

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC066560

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff and the manager take time to get to know the young person. They are really interested in him and his life. As a result, positive relationships between the young person and staff develop quickly, providing him with security.
- Staff work in partnership with education providers and the placing authority to ensure that the young person accesses appropriate education.
- Staff and therapists work collaboratively to ensure that the young person benefits from nurturing care.
- Staff promote the young person's contact with his family, thus ensuring that he maintains his sense of identity. They encourage positive friendships which benefit his self-esteem.
- The manager is new in post, and has clear plans to develop his vision for this new staff team and the home.
- There are a couple of shortfalls. Staff do not consistently follow risk assessments regarding the handing in of cigarette lighters. The manager has not ensured that there has been continuity of care for the young person, and case records do not adequately record decision making about where the young person lives. The manager is aware of these shortfalls and is addressing them.

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

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 (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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered provider must ensure that: 2(b) the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.	18/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording.
In particular, ensure that all decisions regarding young people's placement are clearly documented. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving continuity of care that they need. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home forms part of a social care company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/08/2015	Full	Good
27/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home has recently re-opened after an extended period of closure due to staff shortages throughout the organisation. The registered manager voluntarily cancelled her registration in May 2016 and the home has re-opened with a new manager and staff team. Staff develop positive relationships with the young person who has moved into the home. One key member of staff has moved with him from his previous placement within the same organisation to provide him with some continuity. Staff understand the importance of working effectively as a team to maintain clear boundaries. This provides the young person with a sense of security. Although it is early days yet, stakeholders already recognise improvements in the young person's behaviour. His social worker said: 'The move has been positive – he attended his personal education plan meeting, and his engagement was positive with education and plans for college. He is working well with the therapist.' Staff understand the young person's individual needs and interests. They promote his identity through carefully assessed contact with his family and work towards clear goals to extend this, when it is safe and in his best interests. Staff also promote positive friendships and coordinate activities with friends' carers, as any responsible parent would. As a result, the young person enjoys spending time sharing his interest in riding his scooter at local skate parks with friends. Staff ensure that the young person understands his right to access his files and contribute to his records. He understands how to complain, but this has not been necessary. Staff support the young person to engage with education. In the few weeks that he has been in placement, he has attended college and secured a placement which will begin after the half-term break. He appears well motivated and is engaging with in-house tutoring until he is able to take up his place. Staff recognise what interests him and use incentives to good effect to ensure his continued engagement with education. His teacher said: 'When I saw him last week, it was the first time in a long time that he has looked so well and engaged positively – I'm very pleased.' Staff ensure that the young person receives appropriate healthcare from universal health services. He is in good health, and staff encourage him to eat healthily and to develop his independence skills by planning meals. Staff work in partnership with therapists to ensure a consistently therapeutic approach to the young person's care. The therapist joins team meetings, in addition to her individual work with the	

young person, and an additional therapist is working with the young person's family to improve relationships and increase the level of contact in line with his wishes. His therapist said: 'An example of positive practice is that when a member of staff first started to work with the young person, she phoned and asked for an overview and advice on how best to meet his needs. This is how you hope to be used, as a therapist.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The young person is becoming increasingly safe, because of the actions that his staff take to support him. His social worker is positive about his admission to the home: 'Since the move, there have been no incidents – no damage caused to the home. I feel that he is safe there.' Staff understand what to do when the young person goes missing. They know where he is likely to be and who to contact, should he go missing. There have been no incidences of missing since the young person moved in. However, staff understand how to respond when a young person returns from missing. They are alert to any signs of child sexual exploitation and understand the need to ensure that the young person is safe and well, and the importance of independent return interviews in informing the strategic planning of missing behaviour. The manager ensures that staff receive training in behaviour management techniques to de-escalate situations and on how to use restraint. They are skilled in managing behaviour, consequently restraint has not been required since the last inspection. Staff understand how to manage allegations and child protection concerns, although there have been no referrals made during this inspection period. Staff understand risks associated with the young person's behaviour. However, they do not consistently follow the risk assessments which are in place to reduce the risk of fire by ensuring that the young person hands in his lighter each night. During the inspection, it was clear by the strong smell of smoke in his bedroom that he was smoking in his bedroom. The manager immediately addressed this with the young person and staff. The staff team is newly established and already there have been shortfalls in providing continuity of care, with four temporary staff working in the home in the past three weeks. This does not support the young person in developing appropriate attachments with staff. Now the team is in place, the rota going forward reflects that the team is able to meet the young person's need for consistency.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home has a newly appointed manager who took up his post a few weeks ago. He is not yet registered with Ofsted, but has the appropriate experience and qualifications to fulfil the role, including the level 5 diploma in leadership and management in children’s residential care. He has secured an experienced team of staff who have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the young person. They are developing the ethos of the home to reflect the manager’s vision to provide nurturing care. The manager and staff develop positive relationships with professional stakeholders and families to work in partnership to achieve the young person’s agreed plans. They have robustly tackled his lack of engagement with education, and have secured college interviews and a placement. They ensure that he engages in education each day in the home, prior to this placement commencing. This promotes the importance of learning and maintaining routines. Staff work collaboratively with family members to ensure that the young person benefits from good-quality time with his family. The manager is robust in his management and is clear that escalation of concerns will take place to challenge placing authorities if they fail to maintain plans or prioritise the young person’s needs. He has systems in place to evaluate the quality of care and development plans for his staff team. He is aware of shortfalls in the physical environment which are the result of the long period of the home being closed and is ensuring that these are addressed. He also recognises weaknesses in practice, including the initial lack of continuity of care and incomplete case records; he has the capacity to ensure that these are improved.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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