

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>01/07/2015</b>                                                                           |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC372117</b>                                                                             |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                                                 |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                                                      |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Meadows Care Limited</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House,<br/>Wardle Road, ROCHDALE,<br/>Lancashire, OL12 9EN</b> |

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Mr Niel Shelmerdine</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Mr Paul Smith</b>       |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Mr Scott</b>            |

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| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>01/07/2015</b>           |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                 |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                             |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                 |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                             |
| <b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                 |
| <b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                 |

**SC372117**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people live in a caring and supporting home that is making a positive difference to their lives. In a relatively short period of time young people have made good progress in many aspects of their lives including keeping themselves safe, behaviour management, psychological well-being and re-engaging in education.
- The manager and staff are highly committed to the care and support of young people. Young people's individual needs are central to all aspects of care practice. They benefit from a highly individualised and coordinated approach which means they receive an individually tailored package of care.
- Links with partnership agencies are strong and effectively utilised by staff. Staff work effectively with a range of safeguarding, education and health professionals to ensure young people's known and emerging needs, risks and behaviours are appropriately addressed.
- Staff give young people's safety the highest priority. Care practice is underpinned by effective safeguarding procedures and well thought out risk management strategies that ensure young people are sufficiently protected from harm.
- The home is effectively managed by a competent and able manager who provides strong, child-focused leadership for staff. Staff are well supported in the day-to-day care of young people and have good opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through formal supervision and training.
- The Registered Manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and a clear focus on making any necessary improvements to practice. Good use is made of a range of internal and external quality assurance processes to rigorously scrutinise the homes performance in meeting young people's needs and keeping them safe.
- A small number of shortfalls are noted at this inspection. These relate to the independent return home interviews and training in the management of self-harm for staff.

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

### Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a procedure in place to provide independent return home interviews when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, and that this procedure is agreed with each child's placing authority and fully recorded in each child's placement plan (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- ensure all staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children, specifically that all staff are trained in the management of self-harm. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 34, paragraph 7.12)

### Full report

#### 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 who may need support with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 11/03/2015      | CH - Full       | Adequate             |
| 10/09/2014      | CH - Full       | Inadequate           |
| 25/06/2014      | CH - Full       | Good                 |
| 12/02/2014      | CH - Interim    | Inadequate Progress  |

## Inspection Judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>Young people receive good quality care that is making a difference to their lives. They have only lived at the home for a relatively short period of time but are showing significant progress in relation to a number of concerning behaviours that were prevalent during previous placements. For example, there has been a significant decline in risk taking behaviours such as missing from care and substance misuse.</p> <p>Staff have created a caring and supportive environment where young people feel safe, valued and respected. They have worked exceptionally hard to encourage young people to take control of their lives and make positive decisions about their care and future. They have persevered and made every effort to effectively overcome the obstacles young people present when first admitted to a new home, including overtly challenging and threatening behaviour. This level of commitment has had a settling influence on young people who are now beginning establish positive relationships with staff, manage their feelings more constructively and take part in meaningful education. One parent said, 'I am very satisfied with all aspects of this placement. Staff are doing their best to address the issues and are handling it as best they can. They have been absolutely brilliant.'</p> <p>Staff constantly seek young people's views and provide them with ample opportunity to express these. Weekly meetings are held and young people have the opportunity to choose what they want to eat and how they want to spend their time, for example. They are offered a wide range of activities and are beginning to broaden their recreational experiences, albeit at a slow pace. Staff are sensitive to the fact that young people can lack confidence in trying new things and will try to help them overcome this challenge and fully engage in meaningful and productive activities. For example, staff are currently planning a summer holiday to a caravan park, which will be a new experience for one young person. The young person has been fully involved in planning this holiday and staff have taken him to visit the location in preparation for spending time there. It is hoped by doing this, that the young person will not demonstrate the same reluctance he has shown towards some other activities.</p> <p>Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Staff routinely monitor young people's health and provide the necessary support to ensure routine checks and appointments are up-to-date. They work closely with the organisation's therapeutic team and have established an effective working partnership with external mental health services.</p> |                 |

Young people have been supported to engage with these professionals and are fully benefiting from their input.

Young people's education is provided by the organisation's school. When young people first arrive at the home their timetable is highly individualised and designed to get them to re-engage in education. Staff work closely with education colleagues in delivering a combination of vocational, recreational and academic sessions. The time spent in the classroom is gradually increased at a pace which considers young people's past experiences and individual abilities. This has proven effective in helping young people move closer to attending school on a full-time basis.

The home is spacious, well maintained and decorated and furnished to a very high standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are given an allowance to do this with. They are clearly at ease in their home where they have ample space to spend time with staff or time alone. Staff regularly check the house to ensure it is safe and suitable for young people. Staff and young people are regularly involved in fire drills to ensure they know how to safely evacuate the home in the event of an emergency.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>There are good safeguarding procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation, suspicion of abuse or unsafe practice. Staff are trained in safeguarding and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. As a result, young people are well protected because staff give their safety and welfare the highest priority.</p> <p>Young people's known and emerging behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities are fully recorded in detailed risk assessments. Changes in risk taking behaviour are routinely shared by staff and relevant records are updated to reflect current risk management strategies. Young people are considerably safer because of staff's strong safe care practices. Risk taking behaviour; including going missing from care, offending and substance misuse have significantly reduced for the young person currently living at the home. When required, staff have involved external agencies to provide specialist support for them and young people. One substance misuse worker said, 'The home has good links with us. When they identify risks they are quick to seek our involvement and act on our advice.'</p> <p>There have been four reported incidents of missing from home, all of which have been for relatively short periods of time and none of which have been overnight.</p> |                 |

Staff make every effort to avoid such incidents by encouraging young people to keep themselves occupied and make the right choices about keeping themselves safe. When young people have gone missing staff have taken decisive action by trying to locate the individual and informing relevant parties, including the police and the young person's social worker. The manager confirmed that if young people are missing overnight they are offered the opportunity to meet with a person independent to the home, usually a manager from another home within the organisation. These arrangements are not recorded in young people's care plans or risk assessments. Neither is there evidence that the placing authority have agreed with this process or that the organisation's staff meet the placing authority's criteria for being independent.

Young people are safe and respected at this home. Staff are extremely resilient and demonstrate a strong commitment to overcoming difficult and challenging behaviour, when helping young people settle into their new home. They provide young people with the structure and routine they need to feel safe and secure. Fair and age appropriate boundaries help young people know what is safe and acceptable. Staff work closely with the organisation's therapists whose expertise and skills are used to develop individual, needs based behaviour management strategies. This helps staff gain an insight into young people's emotional needs and develop proportionate responses to what is at times extreme and challenging behaviour. As a result, sanctions are low and there have been no incidents of physical restraint.

Staff make every effort to establish positive relationships with young people, some of whom struggle to make attachments with others. They use these relationships to good effect, encouraging young people to make positive choices about improving their behaviour. For example, staff have encouraged and supported one young person to re-engage with external mental health professionals and start taking their medication. This has had a significant impact on this young person's behaviour, and although still in its infancy stage, they are beginning to moderate and improve their own behaviour. This is evident in the reduction of aggressive and threatening incidents. The young person's social worker said, 'This is a real achievement and I can see the improvements already. This was particularly evident when I last visited when he was much calmer. I can see that he is hard work but staff are really committed.'

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>good</b>     |
| <p>The Registered Manager has been in post since July 2013. He is suitably experienced and is currently in the process of completing the level 5 Diploma. He manages another home within the company, which is in close proximity to this home. This arrangement is not detrimental to the running of this home because the manager maintains a good level of oversight. This ensures the home runs consistently and in the best interests of young people.</p> <p>The culture and ethos of the home reflects a strong, child centred approach and a commitment to promoting and safeguarding young people's welfare. Strong working relationships have been developed with parents, education staff, social workers and needs specific services, including mental health and substance misuse. As a result, young people receive collaborative support to meet their needs.</p> <p>Young people benefit from being looked after by enthusiastic and committed staff that clearly have their best interests at heart. Staff spoke proudly about young people's achievements and obviously enjoy young people's successes. There is a good balance of experience within the team, and all staff that are not in their probationary period either have, or are working towards a relevant childcare qualification.</p> <p>New staff are well inducted and given good support and guidance from experienced staff. All staff receive regular supervision and say that this is beneficial in helping them develop their knowledge, skills and practice. Mandatory training is kept up-to-date. Staff have undertaken additional training in sexually harmful behaviour and attention deficit hyper activity disorder, in response to the current needs of young people. However, not all staff have had training in managing self-harm, which has the potential to compromise the health and well-being of young people currently living at the home, although it is noted that this behaviour has been at an extremely low level since their admission.</p> <p>The manager is diligent in his monitoring of all aspects of the home, in particular practices associated with keeping young people safe. He utilises a range of quality assurance processes and is proactive in addressing any identified shortfalls. He has a good understanding of what the home does well and uses past experiences to further improve care practice in the home. External monitoring and scrutiny from senior managers offers additional rigour to already strong internal management</p> |                 |

monitoring processes.

## 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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