

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372117
Inspector	Nick Veysey
Type of inspection	Full
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	Paul David John Smith
Date of last inspection	12/02/2014

Inspection date	10/09/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	Ofsted imposed a condition of registration on 07/07/2014 that the provider must inform Ofsted of their intention to admit children and young people one month before a child or young person's placement commences.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	inadequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	inadequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
-------------------	-------------------

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
12/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
15/05/2013	Full	good
07/02/2013	Interim	good progress
07/11/2012	Full	good

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
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of the children accommodated there; and make proper provision for the care, education, supervision, support and where appropriate, treatment of children accommodated there (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b))	31/12/2014
25 (2001)	ensure that there are at all times, having regard to the need to promote the health and welfare of children of the children accommodated in the home a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the home. This	31/12/2014

	relates to ensuring that staff lone working with children are competent to do so (Regulation 25(1)(b))	
27 (2001)	operate a disciplinary procedure which, in particular provides for the suspension of an employee where necessary in the interests of the safety or welfare of children accommodated at the home (Regulation 27 (2)(a))	31/12/2014
30 (2001)	ensure if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 take place, the registered person shall notify without delay the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table; in particular provide an accurate account of the incident. (Regulation 30(1))	31/12/2014
34 (2001)	monitor the matters set out in schedule 6; in particular any safeguarding concerns or incidents in respect of a child accommodated at the children's home and the measures taken by staff to respond effectively to these to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's records provide a detailed picture of their daily lives, experiences and progress that contribute to an understanding of their lives. (NMS 22)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **inadequate**

Young people's welfare is not always adequately safeguarded. Despite them making good progress in some areas of their lives, they have continued to take part in serious risky behaviours harmful to their health and well-being.

Young people continue to have challenging relationships with important members of their family. The negative aspects of their relationships with their family present actual and potential risks of aggression and inadequate parental supervision. Changes in the arrangements for seeing their family following a serious incident were not fully risk assessed and appropriately monitored to support young people to manage difficult family relationships. Young people enjoyed a lot of free time without staff having a clear understanding how they were spending their time and of risks associated with their activities.

Young people have made good progress in education. Their attendance has improved, they took part in school trips, achieved qualifications, including GCSEs, and gained places at college. They have made positive choices to no longer go missing and have reduced their challenging behaviour. Young people have developed positive relationships with staff and other professionals, including with the youth offending service and therapists. This included engaging with drug counselling to understand dangers of drug use and potential long-term effects. They develop a better understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle; they are active and eat a balanced and healthy diet. They are also getting better at keeping health appointments. Young people re-established positive relationships with certain family members they had not seen for a number of years and enjoyed a family holiday with them.

Young people develop skills in preparation for adult life, including carrying out household tasks, managing money, shopping and cooking. They are involved in the key decisions about their future. They are making choices about careers and looking at different types of accommodation to help them make an informed choice about where they want to live.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people receive an adequate quality of care. Young people do not always have a daily routine that promotes their development and encourages them to take more responsibility for managing their time effectively. As a result young people have missed some education and other important appointments. Staff encourage young people to get up at a reasonable time, eat at regular meal times and take part in

constructive activities. The results have been mixed with young people often staying in bed into the afternoon. On occasions young people have been left without staff checking on their welfare. The leaders and managers have taken positive action to make it clear to young people and staff that it is not acceptable for young people to stay in bed for lengthy periods of time, even after their education has finished. They have strengthened the policies and practice to ensure young people's welfare is frequently checked and staff actively encourage young people to get up at a reasonable time.

Young people are positive about the care they receive and have good relationships with staff. Staff are interested in young people's lives and want them to do well. They show perseverance in the face of the challenges young people present. They worked through problems with young people and helped them to make progress; for example support young people to achieve in education and gain qualifications. They provided very good support around their physical health care to recover from illnesses and accidents. Their consistent and clear approach helped young people to manage their feelings and reduce challenging and aggressive behaviour.

The manager and staff have established good partnership working with social workers, families and other agencies that promote young people's outcomes. Staff work closely with professionals, family members and young people to develop and follow plans that meet young people's specific needs. For example, staff worked effectively with the youth offending service to ensure young people got support around drug and substance misuse. Some young people frequently attend and contribute to their reviews.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

Young people are not always protected from significant harm. Their individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans do not identify and sufficiently consider all the actual and potential risks to their welfare to enable staff to effectively understand and manage risk. The risk assessments and plans are not up to date and do not consider the actual risks associated with a serious incident when a young person took an overdose, which was harmful to young people's health and welfare. The plans do not consider the lessons to be learned from the incident to better safeguard young people in the future. The risk assessments do not show an understanding of a significant change in young people's behaviour in their drug use from using cannabis to an overdose of medication. The impact of this change of behaviour on young people's safety has not been fully considered and appropriate additional protective measures adopted. The risks associated with young people's use of drugs have not been assessed in relation to young people spending time independently in the community and seeing family members unsupervised. In addition, the manager has not revised the risk assessment in relation to staff working alone with one young person as required by the home's lone working policy. The risk assessment does not consider the potential risks identified in the individual crisis

management plan in relation to the young person's behaviour towards female staff.

The risk assessments and management plans do not provide clear and unambiguous guidance for staff; for example, the action staff should take if they identified that young people may be under the influence of drugs. Staff have an understanding of how individual young people may present when they are under the influence of drugs. This information is not clearly set out in the risk assessment to assist staff in making assessments of young people and the most appropriate action to take to promote their welfare.

Staff do not always consistently follow the protective measures in young people's plans. This means that potentially risks are not being safely managed and young people are not getting the support they require, including medical advice. There are occasions where staff have identified young people are under the influence and not followed the plan to seek medical advice immediately and report any concerns to the manager or on-call manager. Also there have been occasions when staff have not shared information about their assessments of young people using drugs with staff coming on duty the following day. This means that staff do not have a complete picture of the events of the previous day and what further action may be necessary to manage risks to young people. There is not a suitable written record showing what information is shared between staff, which they may look at for reference.

Staff have failed to provide young people with proper care and supervision because they do not always frequently check on young people's welfare while they are still in bed. On one occasion staff did not check on a young person from bedtime until the following afternoon. Subsequently, the provider has taken suitable action to ensure that staff frequently and routinely check young people's welfare when they are in their bedrooms. This has included specifically setting out the arrangements for lone working staff checking young people's welfare.

Staff are effective in promoting positive behaviour and helping young people manage their feelings more constructively. There has been a signification reduction in young people showing aggressive and challenging behaviour, and young people are no longer going missing. Staff have also identified concerns about young people's safety around contact with their families and informed the placing authorities of their concerns.

The Registered Manager ensures staff are carefully selected and vetted before starting work in the home to make sure young people are protected and staff have the skills, experience, qualifications and motivation to work with vulnerable young people. The selection of staff has been very thorough. Suitable health and safety arrangements mean that young people enjoy a safe and secure home environment. Young people regularly practise fire drills and know how to leave the building safely and quickly in case of an emergency.

Despite young people's records being reasonably well written, they do not provide a detailed picture of their daily lives, experiences, progress and how they are

supported by staff. The records identify when staff are worried about young people's welfare, for example staff record that they believe young people are under the influence of drugs, but the records do not show how staff reached that opinion, what they did to monitor and promote the young people's welfare, and their assessment of the most appropriate action to support the young people.

Leadership and management

inadequate

There is a lack of effective management oversight that ensures that young people receive appropriate care and supervision that promotes and safeguard their welfare. The management monitoring systems did not identify that the risk assessment and management plans did not reflect changes in risk, circumstances and care arrangements. The risk assessment had been reviewed following a young person taking an overdose of medication, but had not been changed to take into account this new information about young people's behaviour and how this impacted on their safety. Also, the monitoring systems did not identify that staff did not always follow young people's risk assessments and plans, and did not always inform managers of concerns about young people use of drugs. The provider has taken action following a serious safeguarding incident to address these weaknesses and strengthen the arrangements for safeguarding young people's welfare.

The leaders and manager did not provide Ofsted with a full and accurate account of the circumstances of a serious safeguarding incident without delay. Ofsted and the LADO have not yet received a copy of the provider's internal investigation. This document may have been helpful to evaluate what action the provider has taken in response to the incident. The limited information received so far by Ofsted provided an inconsistent and potentially misleading account of events. Certain details in the written reports to Ofsted about young people's welfare before the incident were not consistent with the home's written daily records and staff statements. The leaders and manager's failure to establish what happened may have inhibited their ability to take appropriate action following the incident in relation to the staff involved and the protection young people. They did not promptly inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about the incident or discuss with LADO the most appropriate action in relation to the staff involved with the incident to safeguard young people.

The leaders and manager have failed to follow the home's lone working policy by allowing a newly appointed member of staff to work alone with a young person. The lone working policy requires staff lone working to have satisfactory completed induction, received relevant training, or validated by a manager as having sufficient prior training and experience. The leaders and manager made the decision based on the member of staff's previous experience, but did not effectively consider the member of staff's competence to work alone with the young person based on their understanding of the young person's needs, routines and risks management plans; and the fact that the staff had spent very little time with the young person and their

relationship was very much in its infancy. Consequently, the young person was not supported in line with his risk assessment and management plan.

The Registered Manager has been in post since January 2013. He is experienced, suitably qualified, and working towards a relevant leadership and management qualification. He manages another home within the same company, which is in close proximity. He divides his time well between the two homes and maintains regular presence in both homes.

There is a sufficient number of experienced staff working at the home. Staffing levels are responsive to the changing needs of young people. Staff confirm they are well supported by their colleagues and manager through regular supervision, training and team meetings. Staff have regular training opportunities to develop their practice, skills and knowledge to meet young people's needs. Staff have worked with local drug services to develop their knowledge and expertise around drug use its impact on young people health and development. They have used this information to support young people to develop their understanding of the risks and impact of drug use, and challenge young people's assumptions about drugs by providing accurate information and guidance. However, there has not been a significant reduction in young people's drug use resulting from this work. Staff have not had opportunities to further develop their competence and skills around drugs through more in depth training. This may help them to have more impact on young people's drug use.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.