

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	04/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC411030
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Meadows Care Limited
Registered person address	Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road, ROCHDALE, Lancashire, OL12 9EN

Responsible individual	Mr Niel Shelmerdine
Registered manager	Vacant Post
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	Monitoring visit 04/08/2015
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	Requires improvement

SC411030

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- An unannounced monitoring inspection was undertaken on the 04 August 2015 following concerns raised with Ofsted regarding the protection and welfare of young people. A number of breaches in regulation required and resulted in immediate action from the provider to ensure the safety and well-being of young people.
- The requirements and recommendations set at the monitoring visit have been sufficiently addressed.
- Admissions procedures are now more robust.
- Placement plans and risk assessments are sufficiently detailed and equip staff to easily understand how to meet the needs of young people.
- The manager notifies the local authority and other relevant parties of every admission and discharge of a young person. This ensures that professionals maintain full oversight of the needs of young people within the area.
- Young people currently placed in the home enjoy positive relationships with staff. This helps them to settle in, develop trust and adopt a more socially acceptable lifestyle to the one previously followed.
- Young people make great strides in their education. They are fully engaged in their learning and enjoy attending school.
- Staff encourage and support the young people to engage in a wide variety of recreational activities. This has had a significant impact on their emotional and social well-being.
- A new manager has been in post since July 2015. He is well supported by senior managers and an experienced deputy manager. The application for registration with Ofsted has been sent within the required timescales and is in progress.
- There are some shortfalls in the effectiveness of leadership and management that require further improvement. These relate to internal and external monitoring. Regulation 44 reports do not review incidents with sufficient rigour. Furthermore the manager's internal monitoring system is weak. It fails to consider the actions needed improve or maintain the quality of care provided in the home.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to enabling, leading and inspiring a culture in relation to the children's home the registered person must- (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualification and skills to meet the needs of each child. With reference to specific training on current legislation and the quality standards.	17/12/2015
44: Independent person: visits and reports Ensure the independent person's report sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. Specifically in relation to reviewing incidents with sufficient rigor (Regulation 44(4)(a-b))	17/12/2015
45: Review of quality of care In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children (Regulation 45 (2)(c))	17/12/2015

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover any action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of privately run children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodate for three young people who may need support with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The organisation also has a registered school and a therapy department, which young people can access if required.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
23/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
11/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
19/11/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people currently living in the home make good progress across all aspects of their lives. They are becoming more confident and benefit immensely from the relationships they have developed with staff. Relationships are a key strength in this home as building and maintaining quality relationships is at the very heart of all that staff do. They have consistently high aspirations for young people and operate as good role models. These supportive relationships have enabled young people to become more confident and able to develop meaningful attachments. Professionals express satisfaction about the care young people receive. An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) stated: 'since placed at this home; it is reported that X is a polite and very pleasant young boy, which is a clear reflection of the excellent work and support from staff which has enabled X to feel safe, secure and valued in his placement.' Parents are equally positive, one stated: 'The care staff provide is absolutely brilliant, I can't fault it. I know my son is happy and settled. I also feel that he is well looked after and he feels safe.' Young people's views and wishes are fundamental to the delivery of the service. Staff maintain a constant discussion with young people to ensure they make their own choices and are able to have an impact on their future plans. Their wishes and feelings are sought in a variety of ways. For example, regular house meetings, key work sessions and informal discussions that occur during the day. Young people also have monthly file consultations with their key workers to ensure that they understand what is written about them, identify goals and celebrate their achievements. As a result, young people enjoy a greater sense of control over their lives which has had a positive impact on confidence and feelings of self-worth. Young people live in a home where their education is highly valued and promoted. Education is an integral part of the home's approach to maximising the potential of young people. Young people enjoy excellent attendance and are developing their potential at steady pace. An IRO stated: 'with regards to X's education, he now looks forward to attending school which he does daily, he is very keen to learn and continues to make good progress.' The home have good links with education providers and work pro-actively to ensure that young people in their care are given equal opportunities to thrive educationally. The young people in the home have their health needs effectively addressed. Those who have previously experienced health related issues now enjoy improved lifestyles. Some young people who struggled with weight management and had	

poor eating habits now enjoy improved health through diet and exercise.

Peer relationships and friendships are encouraged and nurtured. Young people maintain friendships with those who are important to them. Friends are encouraged to visit the home and spend time socialising, enjoying activities and eating meal together. This gives the environment a family-like atmosphere which enables young people to enjoy the same experiences as their peers. Staff work closely with young people, parents and professionals to ensure that contact with family is meaningful. Young people are able to spend quality time with their families within the home or out in the community. One parent said: 'when I visit my child I am welcomed by staff. They are like my other family now. Contact is organised and staff help facilitate this.' This demonstrates that staff work hard to develop positive working relationships with families and as a result of these effective partnerships young people maintain connected to those closest to them, which reinforces their sense of belonging and identity.

Following the requirement made at the monitoring inspection, improvements have been made to the in-house placement plans. These are now personalised and highlight the individual needs of young people. Placement plans are completed from the onset of admission and there is evidence to show that these are reviewed and updated regularly. All areas affecting a young person are covered, although some minor amendments are needed in relation to young people's contact arrangements. In essence, the manager now places greater emphasis on gathering information and working closely with placing authorities. This ensures that young people benefit from having multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing their needs.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The home has been able to evidence improvements have been made to the making of placements. Transition into the home is fully considered by leaders and managers. Managers assess young people's individual needs and consider whether the service can safely care for them. Furthermore, careful thought is given to the potential impact on the other young people living in the home. Young people spoken with during the inspection stated that they are prepared for new admissions in advance and staff keep them informed. In addition, staff also confirm they feel better prepared and informed of any new residents. This is achieved through thorough planning, discussions in team meetings, daily handovers and informal discussions. In practice this means that staff are well informed, and are therefore better able to provide a high level of care to the young	

people from the moment they arrive.

Information gathered at this inspection confirms that improvements have been made to the home's working relationship with key professionals. For example, the manager now notifies appropriate professionals of every admission and discharge of a young person. This was confirmed by a police officer who stated: 'there appears to have been an improvement as the provider appears to be making a real effort to get information regarding arrivals and discharges to me in a timely manner.' This ensures that relevant professionals have full oversight and an understanding of the needs of young people within the area. This promotes young people's safety and protection.

The core staff team have worked together for several years. This has enabled them to shape the culture and ethos of the home. However, not all have kept abreast of practice development and legislative frameworks. This did impact on their understanding of the circumstances and action they could take to safeguard young people who may be putting themselves at risk of injury by leaving the home. However, since the monitoring visit practice has improved. The manager has undertaken individual and team de-briefs which has helped aid reflection and change practice. Staff spoken with during the inspection also demonstrated a clear understanding of what action they could take to protect young people. This clearly demonstrated that the manager has taken appropriate action to ensure that practice promotes the well-being and protection of young people.

The quality of risk assessments has improved, they are now more personalised and are reviewed regularly. In response to young people who may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), the Registered Manager has recently implemented a specific CSE assessment tool. This enables staff to spot potential indicators, assess the level of risk, and ensure that clear intervention strategies are agreed and understood by all. The current mix of young people are not deemed at risk of CSE. Nevertheless, these improved processes have undoubtedly heightened the team's awareness, which further promotes the safety and protection of young people.

The home's missing from care records document that the current group of young people do not place themselves at risk by leaving the home without authorisation. This further demonstrates that young people feel safe, happy and settled.

Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and visitors to the home are checked and supervised appropriately. Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. They participate in regular fire evacuations so that they know how to leave the home in the event of an emergency. Robust health and safety systems also help protect young people from harm.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
There are some shortfalls in the effectiveness of leadership and management that require further improvement. There is evidence that in the period of time the manager has been in post, he is making sufficient effort to improve the service. This is demonstrated in the fact that the requirement made at the previous inspection has been met. That said, there is some way to go. Particularly regarding professional confidence and overall monitoring of the service. The manager is determined to improve outcomes for young people and the future plans for the home are supported by a realistic development plan, which helps the manager and team drive the service forward. He is well supported by senior managers and an experienced deputy manager which promotes the effective operation of the home. The manager has been in post since July 2015. His application for registration with Ofsted has been sent within the required timescales and is in progress. The manager has not taken effective action in relation to on-going staff development. While staff routinely take mandatory training, opportunities have not been made available to ensure that staff understand the recent changes to Children's Homes Regulation 2015, which include the Quality Standards. Staff confirm that some discussion has taken place in team meetings and de-briefs, however these discussions relate to one specific area of the standards. This is a missed opportunity to provide relevant and current training to staff which would help them apply new changes to their practice. There is a good mix of experience on the team and staffing levels are sufficient. Most of the team are either qualified or working towards a recognised qualification. The team all receive regular supervision and their performance is annually appraised. Supervision records reflect good level of discussion and reflection and staff spoken with during the inspection confirm they feel supported by the manager and colleagues. An independent person visits the home on a monthly basis. They produce a report of their findings and proposed remedial actions. Where possible, the visitor consults with young people, staff, professionals and birth families. This is positive as it enables the visitor to assess and evaluate the views of others on quality of care provided in the home. There are however, some shortfalls. Significant incidents are not reviewed with sufficient rigour and the reports do not consistently provide a summary of the visitor's opinion as to how effective the home is at promoting young people's well-being and safety. Furthermore, the manager failed to recognise and address this shortfall. This decreases the effectiveness of the independent visitor's work and does not demonstrate a drive to make improvements.	

The six monthly review of the quality of care as required under regulation does not make clear what actions are to be taken to address shortfalls. This means that the manager is not able to clearly demonstrate an evaluation of the actions necessary to make ongoing improvements to the home.

Significant incidents are recorded appropriately. They offer an overview of the incident, action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. However, the manager does not have a clear system in place to ensure that appropriate people are notified of serious events within 24 hours, particularly when issues arise during the weekend or on bank holidays. This means that Ofsted have not received notifications in a timely manner. This hinders the regulator from effectively carrying out its safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that young people are protected from harm.

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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