

SC411030

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home forms part of a large social care company.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff provide highly individualised and nurturing care which is informed by research. This leads to effective and positive relationships with young people.
- Young people make good progress according to their care plans. Professional stakeholders and families value the quality of care staff provide and the

associated progress that their young people make.

- Staff are effective in their partnership working with the team around each young person so that they all receive consistent care.
- Staff are conscientious in their management of missing behaviour and are alert to the risk of child sexual exploitation. The registered manager escalates concerns effectively.
- Staff value education. They promote young people's attendance and engagement at their educational provision and young people's outcomes improve from their starting points.
- Young people benefit from carefully assessed family contact which promotes their sense of identity.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager has not ensured that risk assessments are up to date and accurate, or that staff recording is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate how risk assessments are implemented.
- The registered manager's management of complaints has not clearly identified the outcomes, including to complainants, and his monitoring report lacks evaluation. The registered manager and staff team have the capacity to address these issues.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
04/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good

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
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered provider must ensure that: 2(a)(i) 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. In particular, ensuring that risk assessments are accurate and up to date.	21/07/2017
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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.	21/07/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	21/07/2017

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in

response to the event. In particular, that staff include details of their actions to prevent recurrence of behaviours to minimise risk. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 63, paragraph 14.13)

- The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. In particular, that the report evaluates the impact of care on young people's transitions from the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people:

Since the last inspection, young people have made good progress against their plans. For example, one young person had progressed from monthly contact with their parent to going away on holiday with them for a week. Staff provide highly individualised care which reflects staff's detailed understanding of the young people's histories, behaviours and needs. One independent reviewing officer (IRO) commented: 'My young person has made significant progress since he entered the placement to the point where we are now working towards him transitioning into a foster placement. Staff have provided, since the start of the placement, a consistent and robust plan which, in my view, has enabled us to reach such a positive outcome for him.' Staff understand the importance of taking the time to get to know young people. They invest in positive relationships with them to provide nurturing care. Young people value these relationships and are able to talk about difficult issues with staff. One young person said: 'I get on well with all the staff, especially my key worker. She helps me with everything.'

Staff welcome young people when they are new to the home. They quickly develop positive relationships and settle. A social worker said: 'From the beginning he has built relationships with staff... I am very impressed and pleased with his progress.' Staff are able to meet young people's needs because they understand the impact of young people's previous experiences on their behaviour, and work closely with in-house therapists to develop therapeutic care plans. A therapist commented: 'I think the staff have and do contribute effectively to young people's progress. The team has effective relationships with the young people, which help them negotiate situations.'

Young people have generally made good progress with their education. Some young people attend school or college and engage well. An inclusion officer said: 'Staff are keen to ensure my young person's progress in education and attend parents' evenings, PEP meetings and any other information evening we may hold. Staff also are willing to work with him on targets at home, such as literacy or maths. He has made excellent progress in school and this is in part down to the staff at the home providing consistent care and stability for him. My young person is happy and settled now both at school and in the home.' Other young people's attendance at education provisions drop off after a period

of engagement, and this coincides with a deterioration in their behaviour and an increase in their risk-taking behaviours. Staff encourage young people to attend education and transport those whose placements are within their placing authority. One young person uses public transport to travel to and from school which helps them to develop their independence and self-confidence.

Staff promote young people's sense of identity and permanence. Staff ensure that young people's views are central to their day-to-day care, as well as regarding significant events, such as where they will live and go to school/college. They promote tolerance and equality and diversity in the home. Staff are aware of young people's individuality and encourage choice and personal expression, for example, in choosing their bedroom décor and their own clothing. Staff celebrate young people's own backgrounds and challenge them when they show a lack of understanding of others' identities and beliefs. Staff promote young people's contact with family and friends when that is safe and in their best interests. They develop effective relationships with young people's families so that young people benefit from consistent care. One parent said: 'Staff do a fantastic job and I am very happy they are looking after him. He is a changed boy –he has come on in leap and bounds. Staff are part of my family now, especially the deputy manager... they keep me updated if there are any issues. He is progressing well and is very content there.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected:

Staff identify risks related to sexual exploitation and act appropriately to safeguard young people. The registered manager acts robustly to ensure that placing authorities take prompt action and staff are conscientious in seeking out young people who may be in risky situations. Staff understand what to do when young people are missing. Staff look for young people in familiar places and contact family and friends. They work with the police to ensure that young people are not at risk of harm for the minimum period. Staff ensure that an independent person completes return interviews to inform strategic planning of managing missing behaviour.

Despite staff's efforts, some young people are not becoming increasingly safe as the incidence of missing has increased over the past month. Staff and professional stakeholders alike can see the impact of poor matching on two young people's outcomes since they have been living together. A social worker said: 'The big thing is the issue of matching, that is the key. That moment of when things deteriorated – increased missing following a settled period, defiance increased, damage to the home... I can't fault the staff, I feel they are doing all they can to keep him safe in terms of looking for him, communication with the police, family of his girlfriend and myself. Staff also complete direct work on healthy relationships and keeping himself safe.' The registered manager did not anticipate this effect through the impact risk assessment process and he is working to safeguard both young people with their respective placing authorities. A family member commented: 'He's doing alright. At first he was doing brilliant... it is still the best home he has been in. When they got another boy in, he went off track – staff did everything to help him get back on track. All the staff are really good with him. Staff keep in touch with me and, when we visit the home, they are always welcoming and we

have a cup of tea. Staff take good care of him, he is as safe as he possibly can be.'

Staff are alert to issues of bullying and ensure that direct work is completed and contracts signed so that young people are aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Staff's detailed knowledge of young people means that they are able to use de-escalation techniques effectively, and restraint has not taken place since the last inspection. Staff make good restorative practice with young people so that police intervention does not unnecessarily criminalise them. Staff develop behaviour management schemes, which are effective for each young person's individual needs and behaviour. For example, some young people respond to staff's prompts, which allow young people time to modify their behaviour before there is a negative outcome. This supports young people to improve their self-regulation. Young people feel safe living in the home and staff provide them with clear and reliable boundaries which promote their sense of security.

Staff have positive relationships with the police and youth offending team (YOT). They work together to support young people's understanding of how to keep safe and avoid violent and criminal behaviour. This has been effective for some young people; however, other young people's involvement in criminal activity increases when a new young person joins the home.

Staff understand how to manage child protection issues and do so promptly. The registered manager and staff safeguard young people and work effectively through partnership working with social workers and the police. Staff notify Ofsted of significant events in the home so that the regulator has oversight of patterns of behaviour. However, staff do not always include the details of the actions that they will take to keep young people safe and to prevent serious incidents occurring which prevents the regulator evaluating staff's responses.

There are shortfalls. The registered manager does not ensure that risk assessments are clear and accurate. They record conflicting information regarding, for example, the time that young people are able to be away from the home on independence time. They are not up to date or clear about what the specific risks are. Staff's case recording does not accurately identify where they and young people are in the home or their actions to manage incidents, which exacerbates this shortfall. This does not safeguard young people or staff effectively. The registered manager and his staff team have the capacity to address these issues promptly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers:

The registered manager is suitably skilled and experienced and is studying for the diploma five in leadership and management in residential child care. He has a good understanding of young people's progress, and is proactive in advocating on young people's behalf to prevent delays in placing authorities implementing their plans.

The registered manager ensures that the home is being run in-line with the statement of purpose. Staff provide care which uses a theoretical base to inform their understanding of attachments. As a result, staff are able to reflect on the impact of their care and to revise their intervention in a way which is most helpful to young people. As a result,

young people receive highly individualised nurturing care.

The registered manager considers the impact of young people joining the home in terms of whether staff can meet young people's needs, and also how they will match with the young people already living in the home. However, there has been an impact of a new young person joining the home which the registered manager is working with placing authorities to safely manage.

The registered manager has monitoring systems in place which identify patterns and trends. He sends a report to Ofsted bi-annually, but the report lacks evaluation of the impact of the care provided on young people's outcomes. For example, in the last period reviewed, there were two young people discharged from the home, but with no evaluation of what was done to reduce risks so that young people could stay, or to evaluate the positive impact of staff in the transition to alternative care. This does not reflect the ability to continuously improve the care provided to meet young people's needs.

The registered manager develops positive relationships with professional stakeholders and families to ensure that young people benefit from consistent care. He safely recruits staff to the team. Staff report feeling well supported with good-quality supervision and training to meet young people's needs. There have been significant changes in the core staff team and the registered manager has needed to use temporary staff to cover shortfalls. This does not appear to have adversely impacted on young people, as experienced staff mentor new staff to share their enthusiasm and interest in young people's lives.

Young people understand how to complain, although this has not been necessary since the last inspection. The registered manager has received complaints from neighbours, which he is working with the local police to resolve. The recording of complaints is unclear; in particular, the outcome of investigations of complaints is not transparent. This does not support learning from the complaints process.

The registered manager and staff ensure that the home is a friendly and welcoming environment. They display photos of young people and their trophies and awards take pride of place, making the home a personalised and homely environment.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: SC411030

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road,
Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Niel Shelmerdine

Registered manager: Daniel Blackburn

Inspector

Rebecca Quested, social care inspector

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