

# SC411030

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is one of several children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

If required, children and young people can access the organisation's school and therapy department.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 October 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 24 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 24/01/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 20/06/2017      | Full            | Good                    |
| 16/03/2017      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 15/11/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement    |

## 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person, if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)) | 29/11/2018 |

### Recommendations

- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

This is with specific reference to ensuring that the information contained within notifications allows Ofsted to make a full assessment of the action taken by the registered person in response to the incident.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

This is with specific reference to ensuring that all staff complete formal training in working with children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people who live at this home benefit from the care and support of a manager and staff team who clearly prioritise their needs. Each young person receives individually tailored support that enhances their progress and life experiences. Feedback from the young people is consistently positive. One young person said, 'The best thing about living here is the staff, especially my key worker, who has helped me a lot.' The young person went on to say, 'We are going for outstanding because this is what the staff

deserve. There is nothing bad about living here.'

The manager and the staff promote a collaborative and inclusive approach to care planning. They work closely with a range of social care, health, education and safeguarding professionals. This 'team around the child' approach considers and responds to each young person's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. This ensures that they receive the services and support they need. Some professionals commented on how much this has improved since the new manager joined the home. One said, 'I am impressed by the manager. She is thorough and in control. She has acted where practice has been weak and is ensuring that [name's] holistic care needs are being met. I have total confidence in her.'

The young people are supported well to enable them to contribute to the running of the home and making decisions relating to their care. They are encouraged frequently to share their opinion on how well they are supported by staff and what they think of the care they receive overall. During the most recent feedback gathered by the manager, a young person wrote, 'I feel supported because whenever I am bothered by something you help me.' In the Ofsted survey, another young person wrote, 'We get to do activity's that are fun, staff are nice and caring.'

Although some young people say that they do not like their school, their attendance overall is good. The manager understands the importance of education and makes every effort to overcome potential barriers to participation; for example, she has provided staff to go into school and support one young person whose placement may not be feasible without this additional support.

The young people have access to the organisation's therapists, who provide direct support for them, as well as providing information and guidance for staff. Staff demonstrate an insightful understanding of each young person's therapeutic care plan and are effective in their efforts to implement this. A therapist said, 'The team are really hot on following plans and risk assessments. They focus on helping the young people to recognise and realise their potential and use their relationships with them to help them to make good decisions.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Observations throughout the inspection indicate that young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff. Young people said that they feel safe and that they can confide in staff, who are supportive and caring.

The young people benefit from one-to-one staffing, which means that staff are available to provide them with individual supervision and support. Risk management has improved since the appointment of the new manager. Risk management plans are comprehensively detailed and based on the input of therapists, and where necessary specialist safeguarding agencies. Staff understand and consistently implement agreed strategies, ensuring that risks are managed effectively, both in the home and in the community. A police officer wrote, 'Staff are professional and promote partnership

working. The safety and well-being of the young person is paramount, as is the safeguarding of the wider community.'

There is an emphasis on working with young people to educate and empower them to make good choices about their own safety. This includes helping them to understand how to manage their own risks within the context of restrictive legal orders, that if breached would be of significant consequence to them. This candid, open and honest approach means that a good balance between protection and the right to take age-appropriate risks has been achieved.

There have been three allegations against staff and five safeguarding concerns since the last full inspection. The previous manager failed to take appropriate action in response to one of the safeguarding concerns. He did not make a safeguarding referral, inform Ofsted or revise risk plans. Fortunately, this did not result in the safety of either the young person or the young people in the community being placed at further risk. Positively, the current manager quickly recognised this shortfall and took the actions necessary to ensure that information was shared and that the inherent risks were managed effectively.

The quality of notifications of serious events is variable. Reports sent to Ofsted are often cut and paste extracts from incident reports and contain little by way of management evaluation. At times, this makes it difficult for the regulator to make an accurate assessment of whether the right action has been taken to manage the concern.

Challenging behaviour is addressed in a supportive way, although some staff are less confident than others when it comes to intervening early; for example, when young people are kicking doors and making demands, as seen on the day of the inspection. The manager recognises this and is working hard to promote consistency throughout the team. Staff are good at encouraging young people to reflect and learn from incidents. This is helping young people to develop ways of managing their emotions without the need for physical restraint. When restraint has been used, it has been done caringly and in the best interest of the individual, other young people and staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The management arrangements have changed since the last inspection. The current manager, who was registered in March 2018, is experienced and close to completing a relevant management qualification. She is highly motivated and focused on improving young people's care experiences and helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes. The manager communicates this clearly to the staff team, whose members are playing a major role in developing a nurturing ethos of care.

Achieving consistency of staffing has at times been a challenge. This is because of staff leaving and other factors that have resulted in staff absence. Positively, changes to staffing have reduced over recent months and there is now a full complement of permanent staff in place. This has provided a good foundation for the manager to embed her chosen care model as well as improving the overall continuity of care for the

young people.

New staff are inducted well, receive regular formal supervision and have their performance appraised annually. There is a good focus on encouraging and supporting professional development, and a range of mandatory and needs-led training opportunities are provided for staff. Some staff have not yet completed training in working with young people who display sexually harmful behaviour. This is a priority, given the needs of some of the young people currently living at the home.

Team meetings are used effectively to share information and review each young person's care. Members of the therapy team attend these meetings and provide good clinical insight that is used well to inform staff's approach to managing young people and meeting their needs. The manager also uses these forums to provide learning opportunities for staff; for example, understanding the dark web, contextual safeguarding and county lines are some of the topics that have been covered.

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths. She makes good use of a range of internal and external quality assurance processes to ensure that all aspects of service delivery and young people's progress are routinely monitored, evaluated and evidenced. She has improved systems for gathering feedback from a range of sources and uses these effectively as part of her internal monitoring. However, the independent visitors have not gathered or used the views of parents or professionals in their monitoring activity since the last inspection.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** Karen Brandon

**Registered manager:** Stephanie Pollitt

## Inspector

Paul Scott, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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