

1228090

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 July 2017

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 9 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Staff do not consistently encourage young people to take responsibility for their anti-social behaviours, or effectively challenge unacceptable behaviours.
- Staff do not continually promote young people's safety. This is because they do not always follow the risk assessments in place to reduce known risks.
- The staff team lacks some of the necessary skills and experience to provide consistently good care to young people.
- Managers and staff do not effectively consult with young people, or others, about the quality of care provided by the home, and the ongoing development of the service.
- Staff do not ensure that young people's case files include all necessary information and documentation.
- Managers do not review the use of bedroom door alarms to ensure that this is necessary and proportionate to safeguard children.
- Managers and staff do not include young people's comments about restraint in incident records.
- The area risk assessment does not take account of issues within the local community.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff receive good-quality, regular and practice-related formal supervision. This supports their learning and development.
- Young people benefit from easy access to in-house psychology services. This supports young people's emotional welfare and well-being.
- Staff support young people to attend school and progress their learning.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/11/2016	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
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to express views, wishes and feelings. (Regulation 7(1)(c) and (2)(a)(ii))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; and</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(b) and (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the</p>	01/09/2017

<p>children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b) and (2)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(d))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(c))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36(1)(a))</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(2)(b)(5))</p>	30/09/2017
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))</p>	01/09/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Staff write individual care plans and support plans for young people. These plans highlight some of the young people's complex and often challenging behaviours. However, staff do not ensure that young people's case files include all necessary

information and documentation. For example, statutory care plans and pathway plans written by the placing authority are absent. Subsequently, staff are unable to confirm that internal plans reflect the longer-term aims of the placing authority. This undermines the effectiveness of internal care planning and the level of personalised care that young people receive.

Relationships between staff and young people are generally positive. One young person said, 'I get on really well with most of the staff. They listen to me and help me to feel better.' Staff do not use these relationships to support young people to move forward with their lives or to develop socially aware behaviours.

Staff do not effectively to seek young people's views, opinions or wishes relating to their care. Young people say that they are 'sometimes asked' where they would like to live in the future, and if they are happy with the care that they receive. Staff do not consistently record these conversations to show that they consult with young people about their care, or about their experience of the home. Furthermore, summaries of weekly young people's meetings lack detail. For example, during one meeting, staff note that young people 'asked for goodies'. Meeting records do not include actions for managers or contain feedback for young people on any issues that they have raised.

Young people make some progress in relation to their starting points. For example, young people attend school more regularly and have made some progress with their learning. Staff work well with teachers to help young people to maintain their school placements. For example, when young people find it difficult to concentrate for long periods, staff work with teachers to come up with solutions. Reduced timetables and ongoing engagement reduces the need to exclude young people. Because of staff support, young people begin to recognise that education is important. They also start to understand the positive impact that education has on their development and future aspirations. When young people are not in school or college, the staff ensure that they have structured 'in-house' learning programmes. This helps young people to stay motivated and to continue their learning during periods of absence.

Staff support young people to live a healthy life-style and encourage them to eat a healthy diet. Staff work with specialist agencies so that young people have up-to-date information about the risks associated with alcohol or substance misuse. This helps young people to make informed choices. Young people have easy access to the organisation's clinical psychologist. This supports young people's emotional well-being. Staff do not ensure that young people's case files include all necessary health information. For example, immunisation records and recent medical reports are missing. This does not enable staff and managers to review all young people's health needs effectively.

When young people are emotionally and socially ready to move towards adulthood, staff devise basic independent living plans. Staff use these plans to assess young people's practical skills, such as cooking and budgeting, and highlight areas that young people need to work on. Young people say that they like the opportunity to cook for themselves and others, and see this as a 'good thing' about the home.

Young people say that staff help them to maintain their relationships with their families. Staff work in partnership with the placing authority to make sure that meetings and

conversations between young people and their families are positive. Furthermore, that any arrangements take account of young people's emotional, social and practical needs. This means that children are not isolated from their families.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection there have been a number of incidents in the home, and within the vicinity of the home, that compromise young people's safety, welfare and well-being. Most of these events concern young people who have now left the home. However, there have also been some more recent episodes of unacceptable and anti-social behaviours. Some staff lack the experience and skills necessary to challenge young people's behaviour effectively. Furthermore, staff do not consistently encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions. Some one-to-one sessions are not effective because staff do not use these meetings to help young people to reflect on their behaviours. As a result, young people do not fully comprehend the negative impact their actions may have on others. This means that young people are not always motivated to change their behaviour.

Partnership working between the staff, the placing authority and other agencies, such as specialist police teams, help staff to identify risks. These risks include the potential for young people to go missing from the home, for young people to harm themselves or others, and an increased risk of child sexual exploitation. Managers write risk assessments to provide staff with guidance on how to manage known risks, and the actions to take to reduce these. However, staff do not always follow this guidance. For example, when young people go missing from the home, staff do not always search the local area to locate the young person. As a result, staff do not take all available steps to reduce known risks and to promote young people's safety.

Staff use rewards and sanctions to encourage young people to manage their own behaviour, and to instil boundaries. When situations escalate, staff occasionally use physical restraint to keep young people and others safe. Staff do not consistently ensure that they include young people's comments on restraint records or in other supporting documents. This shortfall limits the registered manager's ability to fully evaluate the suitability of the use of this measure of control.

Young people's movements around the home are monitored through the use of bedroom door alarms. Staff say that they believe this restriction is necessary to safeguard young people. However, managers and staff do not appropriately risk assess the need for this surveillance. The use of these alarms is now custom and practice in the home. All young people are subject to this restriction, regardless of the risks that they may pose to themselves or others. For some young people, this is an unnecessary intrusion on their privacy.

Staff complete safeguarding and child protection training. These courses include information about safeguarding referral processes, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and bullying. When appropriate, staff share this learning with young people. This helps to raise young people's awareness of issues that may jeopardise their safety. For example, staff complete sessions with young people around

bullying and the negative impact this has on their development, self-esteem and confidence. As a result, bullying in the home has reduced and young people no longer see this as a concern. One young person said, 'Bullying did happen, but it doesn't really anymore because the staff have sorted it out and we all talked about it.' Furthermore, young people say that they are confident that the manager will address any issues that they raise. One young person said, 'You can make a complaint or just say if something is not right and it gets sorted out.'

The registered manager has taken action to improve recruitment processes. For example, staff recruitment records now include a candidate's full employment history. This helps the registered manager to decide on the suitability of staff to work with young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager successfully registered with Ofsted in February 2017. She has relevant experience and holds an appropriate qualification in the management of children's residential care service.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the staff team. This has caused some instability and does not provide young people with consistency. Furthermore, managers have appointed staff who do not yet have a level 3 qualification in caring for young people. As a result, less than half the staff team are qualified and have the full range of skills that they need for their role.

There are unresolved complaints and concerns raised by some members of the local community due to young people's behaviour. As a result, community police teams are involved with staff and young people. The registered manager is taking steps to address these concerns and work is ongoing. Strained relationships between the home and some local residents raises questions about the suitability of the location of the home. The registered manager is to consider the impact of difficulties in the community on young people and others, in her annual review of the premises.

The registered manager prioritises young people's needs. She retains an overview of young people's progress and achievements. However, structured monitoring systems are in their infancy. These systems do not enable the registered manager to effectively evaluate the quality of care the service provides. Furthermore, the registered manager does not yet seek and take account of the views of young people, staff, other agencies or professionals to inform the development of the service.

Partnership working arrangements between the service, the placing authority and other professionals are generally positive. One social worker said, 'I think the managers and staff are doing a good job. [Name of young person] is making some progress and has turned a corner. The manager keeps me up to date with what's going on.' When partner agencies fail to meet young people's needs or support their development, the registered manager challenges their inaction. This increases the potential for young people to receive integrated care and support.

Staff are motivated and enthusiastic, although few have experience of working in residential care. The registered manager recognises the need to grow and nurture the

skills and experience in the staff team, to better support young people's development. On-line courses supplement internal face-to-face training programmes. Staff benefit from regular and practice-related supervision. This helps the manager to monitor staff's performance and highlight their learning needs. This approach helps staff to develop their professional competency.

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: 1228090

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: Kirsty Robinson

Inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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