

1228090

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Interim 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 date: 12 December 2017

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 11 July 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Young people have made various progress since the last inspection. One young person was supported to move into another home within the organisation after his anti-social behaviour interfered with his progress. Staff have maintained informal links and supported his transition well. One new young person has moved in and is making good progress.

Staff promote independence skills for some young people and provide nurture to those who are not yet ready. One young person is benefiting from music therapy. She is now confident to express herself through playing the keyboard and the guitar. Therapy, as part of young people's initial assessments, helps them to receive the help they need to start to overcome past traumatic events.

Despite this, some young people's school attendance is still not good enough. Partnership working with the virtual school head and additional motivational plans,

drawn up by the manager, have not yet been successful in establishing regular school attendance for two young people. Although there had been some improvement in attendance for these young people, their current attendance has dipped from 93% in September to 29% in November. This must improve if young people are to achieve any academic success.

The previous full inspection raised nine regulatory requirements. The registered manager has taken action to meet the majority of these regulatory shortfalls. However, shortfalls persist in two significant areas relating to how the staff keep young people safe when they are missing from the home. Staff's response to young people is still not good enough and this has the potential to jeopardise young people's progress.

This is the third inspection to find that staff still do not always follow young people's plans to manage risk when young people are away from home at night. For example, on three recent occasions, staff failed to implement the procedure to search for the young person and to notify police. Consequently, a young person was missing overnight and staff had no knowledge of his whereabouts. This weakness in staff's response means that they still do not take all the necessary steps to safeguard young people.

Despite there being a constructive approach to helping staff to improve their practice, including through training and when necessary using disciplinary proceedings, some staff still do not consistently safeguard young people. Their poor decision-making when young people go missing from home, or when a young person fails to return home on time, demonstrates their inexperience in keeping young people safe. Inconsistent messages by staff have a significant impact on how young people feel. For example, one young person told the inspector, that they know some staff do not care when they stay away.

The registered manager has consulted with young people about the routine use of bedroom door alarms at night. Consequently, only young people who want or need this level of surveillance now have it in place. However, the registered manager and staff still only risk assess the need for this level of surveillance during the night, and not during the day. The use of these alarms throughout the day is still routine practice in the home. The manager told the inspector it was necessary as a tool to help staff monitor young people's whereabouts, because of the size of the building. During the inspection, the manager removed the alarm for the daytime period for one young person who did not want or need it. For the others, this institutional security system remains an unnecessary intrusion into their privacy.

Staff are better at encouraging young people to take responsibility for their actions. For example, staff now help young people to reflect on their behaviours in one-to-one sessions. The use of sanctions has dramatically reduced and there have been no restraints since the last inspection. However, strategies are not immediately clear to staff, because plans for young people's behaviour and risk management hold different information. For example, the behavioural plan for one young person does not address the issues or strategies for their key issues of not getting up or going to bed on time, coming home on time or staying out late. Staff take control of young people's pocket money to reduce the risk of them going missing, but this is not clear in young people's

behavioural plans.

Staff are much better at ensuring that they include young people's comments about measures of control in records. However, the electronic recording system for these measures of control does not easily allow the manager to track that these debriefs always take place. More positively, young people's other views, wishes and feelings are now captured in their records. This helps to provide an important record for young people of their time at the home.

The registered manager gives good feedback to young people on any issues that they have raised. For example, the manager's response newsletter is pinned up on the noticeboard and provides young people with a helpful reminder that consultation is a two-way process.

Statutory care plans and pathway plans written by the placing authority are now in place. Staff are now ensuring that young people's case files include all necessary health information. For example, immunisation records and recent medical reports are on file. This means that staff have the information they need to base their daily care on.

Structured monitoring systems are better developed. These systems now enable the registered manager to evaluate the quality of care that the service provides. Furthermore, the registered manager now takes account of the views of young people and professionals as part of their six-monthly review of the quality of care.

There are no unresolved complaints or concerns raised by members of the local community. Relationships are now civil. Police do not need to investigate reported concerns about staff and young people made by the local community. The registered manager has considered the impact of difficulties in the community on young people and others, in her annual review of the premises and in consultation with young people. New young people do not feel any impact of the earlier neighbourhood issues.

Partnership working to improve the experiences of young people is better. Staff will now challenge other services when necessary. For example, staff have challenged a local authority about their support to one young person and about the timeliness of return interviews after young people have been missing from care.

A programme of redecoration means that the home is looking more homely. More than half the staff team is now qualified.

A consistent management team is bringing stability into the home. Monitoring has made some improvements in the quality of care and in staff professional practice. However, further improvements are still required in terms of how the service helps and protects young people who go missing from care and refuse to attend school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
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, the 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 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 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)(2)(a)(i))</p>	31/01/2018
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(c))</p>	31/01/2018
<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>	31/01/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that the children's home works with the local authority to make sure that the young people they are responsible for are getting the support they need to participate. For further information see 'Participation of young people: education, employment and training', www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.17)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Niel Shelmerdine

Registered manager: Kirsty Robinson

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

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