

# 1228090

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is one of four operated under a contract with a large local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who may have experienced trauma, placement and family breakdown.

The organisation's clinical team provides a service to children and staff.

The home has been without a registered manager since December 2018. A manager is now in post and applying to register with Ofsted.

**Inspection dates:** 31 July to 1 August 2019

**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:** 20 March 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/05/2018	Full	Good
12/12/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/07/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who 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>ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare. (Regulation 7(1)(c)(2)(a)(i))</p>	20/09/2019
<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>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(b)(2)(a)(iii))</p>	20/09/2019
<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(2)(a)(i))</p>	20/09/2019
<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</p>	20/09/2019

<p>registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(f))</p> <p>This is with particular regard to ensuring that the review of incidents provides all staff with the opportunity to reflect on any potential learning from these events.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(c))</p> <p>This is with particular regard to ensuring that staff engage children in relevant one-to-one sessions as reflected in their care plans.</p>	20/09/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	20/09/2019
<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). (Regulation 46(1))</p>	20/09/2019

## Recommendations

- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.2)

## Inspection judgements

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

Children's progress is limited in some areas of their development. Statutory care plans highlight the need for some children to complete specific one-to-one sessions. These sessions include building positive relationships and the safe use of social media. Staff do not consistently deliver this work and the quality of these sessions is variable. This does not fully support children's progress and safety.

Staff use information from children's placing authorities to develop internal care plans and risk assessments. However, children are unaware of the content of these plans. This is because staff do not discuss these with children or seek their views or opinions. This reduces the effectiveness of these plans in helping children to achieve their goals.

Staff prioritise children's education. They understand the importance of working with education providers, virtual school services and allocated teaching staff to address the challenges children face. All children have suitable school placements and their school attendance is generally high. One child said, 'I like school now, much more than I thought I would, it's good.'

Children benefit from easy access to clinical and psychological services to support their mental health. Some children participate in bespoke therapy sessions delivered by specialist staff. These help children to make sense of their past experiences and understand how these may influence their current actions and behaviours. This approach enables children to make progress and prepare emotionally for adulthood.

Relationships between children and staff are mostly positive. Children said that they like spending time with staff doing activities and 'fun stuff'. Staff encourage children to make friends outside of the home by joining local clubs and groups. This helps children to expand their social circles, make new friends and grow in confidence.

Staff work with children's families and placing authorities to facilitate regular family visits and social occasions. These help children to maintain these important relationships and ensure that they are not isolated from their families.

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

Staff are competent in identifying children's risks and other factors that may impact on their safety. However, strategies in place to manage and reduce these risks remain weak. For example, risk management focuses on engaging children in one-to-one sessions to help them to understand how their actions may be harmful to themselves or others. Staff do not consistently deliver these sessions. Consequently, risk management strategies are sometimes ineffectual and this does not fully promote children's welfare. This shortfall was raised at the last inspection and has not been satisfactorily addressed.

Children's behaviours can be extremely challenging and complex. These include assaults on staff, verbal abuse, property damage and bullying. Staff use a range of strategies to try to de-escalate these incidents. They only use physical restraint as a last resort. Staff complete records of these events in detail to show that this measure of control was necessary and proportionate.

Staff do not make sure that they work with children effectively to help them to take responsibility for their behaviours. For example, when staff sanction children because of their negative behaviour, they do not always make sure that these are restorative in nature to help children to reflect on their actions and consider how their actions may impact on the welfare of others. This means that children are not always motivated to change their behaviours.

Staff work closely with social workers, families and local police teams to quickly locate children if they are missing from the home. They make sure that they welcome children back to the home and arrange independent return interviews. These give children the opportunity to talk about the reasons why they may have gone missing from the home. This information helps staff to identify possible factors that may influence a child's decision to leave the home. However, follow-up work with children around these reasons is variable in quality and effectiveness.

Since the last inspection, senior managers have reviewed safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff benefit from face-to-face training around this area of practice. They have a good understanding of safeguarding referral processes and recognise their personal responsibility for protecting children from harm. This helps to protect children from possible abuse.

The home is now a more welcoming environment and communal areas include soft furnishings and appropriate seating. Staff complete health and safety checks and fire safety checks, and contact local contractors if any repairs are needed. This means that children live in a safe environment.

Managers review the location of the home. However, this risk assessment does not include local environmental factors, such as open bodies of water, that may impact on children's safety when they are away from the home. In addition, it is not clear what staff do to educate children about these risks.

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

The home has been without a registered manager since December 2018. The manager in post at the time of the last inspection has now left the home. The previous registered manager has returned to the home and is in the process of re-registering with Ofsted.

Constant changes to the day-to-day management of the home affect children's progress and overall experiences. For example, as new managers joined the home and other managers left, the poor quality of some one-to-one sessions was missed. Within the

quality of care review report, managers do not take account of or consider the impact of this shortfall on children's progress and achievements. This means that managers do not always have a clear overview of the strengths of the service or areas for improvement.

Managers review significant events and incidents of concern. However, they do not use these reviews to influence the development of the service. For example, when incidents occur managers limit their investigations to identifying the facts of the event. They do not enable all staff to reflect on these incidents to learn from the experiences of others, or to shape future practice. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that staff practice continually evolves to meet children's needs.

Training programmes for staff reflect children's individual needs and include bespoke sessions with the clinical team. This helps staff to understand children's needs and behaviours. However, staff do not always receive regular formal supervision. Consequently, managers do not sufficiently monitor or review staff performance. As a result, they are unable to quickly identify shortfalls in staff practice that may impact on children's progress.

Professional relationships between managers and external agencies are mostly positive and effective. Social workers said that managers understand children's complexities and that communication with the home is 'open and professional'. This means that children benefit from an integrated approach to care planning that reflects their individual needs.

## **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:** 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:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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