

1250915

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of 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 may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is managed by a registered manager who has a number of years' experience.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 February 2020

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: 8 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2018	Full	Good
14/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection, three young people have left the home. One young person presented high-risk behaviour and so an immediate termination of the placement was necessary. Good transition planning supported two young people to move into post-16 accommodation in their home town and closer to their family. The staff team has remained in contact with young people to ensure that they have settled at their new home. Three young people have arrived at the home and were living there at the time of inspection.

The staff demonstrate that they care about the young people who live at the home. This has strengthened young people's relationships with staff and helped staff to support young people to work through incidents in their time at the home. Young people understand why boundaries are in place and generally work well with routines and structure in the home.

Consultation with young people is good and young people feel they can talk to staff. Young people's meetings take place regularly. Young people have their own agenda to raise any concerns or changes they would like to improve their home. One young person said, 'I know that if I wasn't okay, I could go and talk to staff. Staff worry and care about me.'

One young person has made significant progress in school since his starting point at the home. The young person's school attendance is currently 95% and they have received two separate awards for the most improved pupil. Education routines for other young people need improving. This is to ensure that all young people consistently attend education and achieve projected grades towards future college planning. A recommendation has been made in relation to this shortfall.

The staff team works effectively with families of young people, to strengthen relationships and promote regular visits. Staff have helped young people to work through any challenges they have in terms of their family relationships. As a result, young people have re-engaged with family members who they have not seen for long periods of time. With support from staff, young people have travelled independently on the train to see family who live at a distance.

Young people have access to emotional support and the team works hard to encourage young people to recognise the benefits of these sessions. This has included adapting sessions to a music studio where young people feel more relaxed to engage. Therapists attend staff meetings on a regular basis, to discuss progress made by young people. Overall, young people receive a good level of emotional support from staff who understand their needs.

Staff promote good health for young people. Referrals are made to specialist health services when needed. Staff have liaised with a drugs and alcohol misuse service to help young people to access aromatherapy treatments and massage. Young people

have responded well to this and attend sessions to promote better health for themselves.

The staff enjoy spending time with the young people and show an interest in their recreational activities, such as gaming, football and trampolining. Memories from activities and holidays are captured in photographs around the home. This adds to the welcoming feel of the young people's home.

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

The registered manager has addressed the requirement raised at the last inspection, associated with medication management. However, there has been a further shortfall in relation to the recording of medicine. Staff have failed to consistently record when prescribed medication has been offered and refused by young people and so a recommendation has been raised to address this.

The registered manager and staff have a thorough understanding of risks for young people. Risk-taking behaviour is recorded and updated regularly in risk assessments to ensure that they contain current information. The staff team works with agreed strategies to minimise risks to young people and maintain their safety. Staff regularly talk to young people to negotiate safe boundaries, to enable young people to take and manage age-appropriate risks.

The staff are proactive in their approach to working with young people who have very complex needs. Staff work hard to ensure that if a young person is in crisis, it does not impact on the progress of other young people in placement. Behaviour management plans are robust. As a result, physical restraint has rarely been used by staff and police involvement to deal with serious incidents has been minimal.

The registered manager has ensured that all staff have a good understanding of safeguarding. This has enabled staff to respond quickly when young people go missing from home or have been involved in associated risks, such as child criminal exploitation and county lines. The team consistently acts to safeguard young people who are vulnerable to or at direct risk of these factors. The team is working tirelessly with one young person to help them to make better choices and minimise risk.

There is effective partnership working with external safeguarding agencies and the police. When concerns for young people arise, strategies are agreed at multi-disciplinary meetings. Professionals involved in young people's care have provided extremely positive feedback about the work undertaken with young people. A social worker said, 'I am really happy with the placement. From the starting point at placement, [Name of young person] has progressed and the therapeutic wraparound service has supported this. I wish more placements were this good for young people.'

Allegations are handled quickly and effectively, with proper action taken to safeguard young people. As a result, the frequency of allegations has reduced, and this proves

that young people feel safe. The registered manager has ensured that mediation work is undertaken to rebuild relationships between young people and staff members following an allegation.

Safe recruitment practices are utilised to ensure that young people are protected and that all staff at the home are suitable and safe to work with young people. The registered manager has swiftly dealt with any practice issues in the team, to prevent any impact on the young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is run by an experienced manager who has a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential care. The registered manager is passionate about his role. He has an excellent understanding of the young people and acts as a good role model for staff and young people.

The manager is proactive in his working relationship with all professionals and ensures that staff communicate and update professionals consistently. During the inspection, a police officer working closely with the registered manager said, 'The relationship between the manager and the police is by far one of the best in a long time.' This was evidenced in the work that has been done with the police to safeguard young people.

All staff spoken to at the inspection said they feel very supported by the manager and each other. Staff receive regular supervisions and have their performance appraised at set timescales throughout the year. The manager uses regular team meetings as an opportunity to deliver development workshops to address key issues that affect young people, for example sharing information with the team after meeting with a local member of parliament to discuss current safeguarding issues.

Most of the staff are qualified to level 3. The rest of the staff are completing the qualification and will obtain it in the timescales set by regulation. The registered manager has also ensured that staff have received training specific to young people's complex needs, to help support young people to achieve the best outcomes.

The registered manager is a strong advocate for young people and is proactive in ensuring that young people receive the services and support they need to progress. The manager demonstrates that he will confidently challenge professionals and decisions that he does not feel are in the best interest of the young people or the home.

Monthly visits take place by an independent visitor, and the reports give a good overview of the home and the staff's approach to safeguarding. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. His monitoring of the quality of care in the home is reflective and shows that he is always looking for ways to improve the service and the knowledge of the staff team.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning and ensure that the home's routines do not form barriers to children wishing to use the home's resources to study. Staff must support children with home study by encouraging them to learn independent study skills and helping them to practice those skills. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Specifically, young people should have a clear daily routine in place that is consistently promoted by the staff team, to ensure that young people sustain a good level of attendance and attainment in education.

- Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 1250915

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Karen Brandon

Registered manager: Lee Matthews

Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

Louise Redfern, Social Care Compliance Inspector

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