

1228090

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and 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 registered manager of the home is currently on leave from the home. The organisation has alternative management arrangements in place during this period.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 31 July 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children receive thoughtful, committed care from staff who are passionate about them and their well-being. Staff develop good relationships with children that withstand challenging times. Children know staff care about them.

Staff work hard to engage children in individual and group sessions that link to risks and plans. These sessions are wide ranging, adaptable and relevant. A psychologist supports the home and helps to guide staff to have reflective interactions with children. The psychologist also supports children directly, and this is well valued by children, staff and professionals outside the home. Therefore, children are surrounded by different options for support to suit them at specific times.

Staff have worked hard to develop their practice to become more reflective. The psychological support, as well as support from managers, has enabled staff to be resilient and remain emotionally engaged in challenging times. During the recent and ongoing period of social restriction, several staff volunteered to isolate with children if needed. Children benefit from the stability of the staff team and the commitment it has to them.

During the period of lockdown, there was a clear focus on children's education, and the children in the home have remained engaged and made progress.

Staff work hard to ensure a homely environment. Where maintenance issues are identified, these are swiftly reported and rectified. This means that children continue to have a positive environment to live in.

The safety of children

Staff are positive about the work that has been done by managers to improve the consistency of care and boundaries for children. This clarity benefits children who may not always agree with the boundaries, but who do believe they are fair.

Staff include considerable information in children's risk assessments, including some known triggers and strategies for staff to follow. However, risk assessments are not updated with all relevant information, and the rating system is confusing. As a result of this lack of information, staff do not have an accurate record to refer to when they need it. However, staff know children well, and there is no indication this has had a negative impact on children's safety.

Staff respond well when children go missing from the home. They try to look for children and work hard to maintain contact with them to assure themselves children

are safe. Management oversight of records is lacking. This means that records remain incomplete and learning is therefore limited.

Staff attempt to support children after they move out of the home, even when children have left at short notice. This indicates to children that staff care.

Managers and staff have put in place clear procedures to mitigate against risks associated with COVID-19. These are child focused and have supported staff to keep children as safe as staff can from the impact of this virus.

Leaders and managers

Managers in the home have taken action to meet the majority of requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection.

Staff feel well supported day-to-day by managers who ensure that there is always sufficient staff to work with children. Staff remain positive about the home and the children in their care.

Changes in management have not negatively impacted on the home, children or staff team. Children feel able to approach managers with issues that are important to them, knowing that they will be listened to.

Senior managers have put in place adequate management arrangements to cover absence, but they do not ensure that acting managers know they have access to all relevant management information systems. This hinders management oversight.

Supervision is regular and well valued by staff. Records do not have sufficient detail to capture practice discussions that help staff develop. This is a missed opportunity.

Managers take action where safeguarding concerns are identified. This includes for children who do not live in the home who are at risk of harm. This is good practice.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—	15/10/2020

<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)(2)(a)(i))</p>	
<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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p>	15/10/2020

Recommendations

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b).
(‘Guide to children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: 1228090

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lara Elsegood

Registered manager: Kirsty Robinson

Inspectors

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector
Helen Malanaphy, Social Care Inspector

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