

# 1240936

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have experienced childhood trauma.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2021. The manager has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

### Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 5 May 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/05/2021	Full	Good
20/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/03/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

There are currently two children living in the home. One child has moved on and another child has moved in since the last inspection. Children are carefully matched to one another, and staff are trained to ensure they can meet the needs of children before they move in.

The home environment in places is looking tired, and some areas in bathrooms are unclean. There is also some disrepair in the kitchen, garden and one bathroom. This detracts from the otherwise calm and homely environment.

Children benefit from positive relationships with staff. Staff engage with children regularly on important topics such as their emotional well-being, their friendships, and offer them advice. The home's therapist supports staff through reflective meetings and monthly in-depth consultations to assist everyone in understanding children's needs from a trauma-informed lens.

When children have made complaints, the manager consults with them, explains the process, thoroughly investigates, and writes to children to explain the outcome in a personalised way. The children's guide, however, could be improved to give children more helpful information for when they move in about the complaints procedures, advocacy arrangements and the daily routine.

Children's health needs are well met. The manager has advocated for a child who needed a specialist assessment and, when there have been delays, she has been persistent in seeking this out. However, when the response is still unsatisfactory, the manager could make use of escalation more readily. When one child has struggled with their emotional well-being, the manager has coordinated a clear plan with the professional network, which is regularly reviewed to support the child. This is resulting in the child feeling more positive and less anxious.

Children's engagement in education has improved. One child has been out of education for a long period of time. The manager and staff team have worked well with the local authority to gradually help the child return to education. Another child is engaging in education every day and is on track with a career in mechanics. The child's education provider informed the inspector that communication with the child has been excellent.

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

Children have in recent months become more settled and, as a result, they have had less significant incidents. Staff very rarely need to hold children to keep them safe.

When staff restraints occur, staff use a supportive approach to help the child and only do this when it is absolutely necessary to keep them safe. Some of the

recording in the lead-up to the incident missed some details and an independent person did not lead the staff or child debrief. This is a missed opportunity for the team to fully reflect on the incident, and could inhibit how much the child may feel able to share how the experience affected them.

When children are at risk of harming themselves, there is a clear safety plan and staff regularly reflect with professionals on the best way to support the child. Staff follow these plans to help keep the child safe. When there have recently been shortfalls in the staff responses, the manager immediately addressed this and worked with the staff members to help them improve their skills. This creates an effective system of support for the child.

When children go missing, staff look for them. Staff contact important people in the children's lives and the police so that the children are found quickly. However, some plans and some records around missing incidents have missed important information. This has not had an impact on the quality of any child's care, but it means that staff do not always have clear guidance on how to respond to a child's risks. It also prevents managers from being able to fully quality assure the practice.

When there are concerns that children could be at risk of exploitation, the manager consults with other agencies to ensure that the level of risk is understood and children are helped as far as possible, to reduce this risk. Staff consult with the home's therapist to help inform their care and to support children who are at risk of exploitation and harm.

When children make allegations, the manager consults with the relevant professionals and investigates concerns when directed to. Children are also spoken to so that they are involved in the process.

Staff respond to children in a nurturing and positive way, and consequences are not often used. However, on the rare occasion that consequences have been used, these have not been restorative in nature. Staff have, on occasions, removed a child's activity which is the one thing which is most important to them. The manager has more recently supported staff to reflect on this with the team therapist to find more effective ways of helping children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager has continued to manage the home since February 2020 and is suitably qualified. There are plans for her to move on from the service soon, but handover arrangements are already underway with her successor, to ensure continued consistency for the staff and children.

The manager is aspirational about children's progress and what she believes they can achieve. She is nurturing towards staff in her approach. Staff feel that her commitment to their well-being is what helps motivate them to do their job so well. This leadership has helped staff to develop a unified approach to the children's care.

The manager regularly supervises staff and has further discussions with them when needed should there be development areas for their practice. This is helping staff to regularly review the care of children and their own career development.

The manager has good oversight of the day-to-day care provided to children, including any incidents that may occur. This aids her audits to ensure she understands what is happening in the home on a daily basis. The independent person visits the home regularly. However, at times their consultations with professionals have been poor and they sometimes repeat information from previous months in the reports. This prevents this quality assurance mechanism from being used to good effect to improve the quality of care.

The manager completes her quality of care review every six months and this effectively evaluates all aspects of children's care. She consults with children and people in their lives to inform the care and creates achievable targets for the next six months.

The manager uses team meetings to support staff in developing their nurturing care of children. The manager continually upskills the staff team. The manager uses this, and a combination of formal training courses, to ensure that staff have had the training to meet the needs of children.

The manager has implemented a new system since the last inspection to help her track gaps in staff members' employment histories more effectively. This has proven beneficial, as recruitment is now completed fully in line with schedule 2.

The review of the premises is completed annually by the manager. Children provide feedback on the location in the most recent review. However, this and feedback from professionals have not been used to inform the assessment of possible risks in the local area. This means that some feedback, which could be used to inform this assessment, has been overlooked.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the home is clean and homely, and any damaged areas or items in the home are repaired or replaced in a timely way.</p>	30 November 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, 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)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	14 December 2022

<p>This specifically relates to managers ensuring that records of physical interventions include full details.</p> <p>Additionally, this relates to debriefs of children and staff being completed by those who were not involved in the incident.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a) (5))</p> <p>In particular, the independent person's report may provide actions that the registered person may take to improve the quality of care received by children in the home and consult with relevant professionals and children.</p>	<p>14 December 2022</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour should be 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 ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand:
  - what the day-to-day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home');

- the Statement of Purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there);
  - how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure;
  - how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and
  - how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of the premises considers feedback from children and relevant professionals. In their review, they use the feedback they gain to help plan strategies to overcome any potential risks in the local area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

## **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:** 1240936

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**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:** Chanel Bryant

## Inspector

Fiona Roche, Social Care Inspector

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