

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Unique reference number	1244161
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Blue Mountain Homes Ltd
Registered provider address	Flat 17, Leeland Mansions, Leeland Road, London, W13 9HE

Responsible individual	Pradeep Manaktala
Registered manager	Shaun Hicks
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	07/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1244161

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The young person has become safer over time.
- Risk-taking behaviour by the young person, such as going missing from the home and self-harming behaviours, have reduced and the young person has developed a sense of safety.
- Staffing levels are excellent and protect the young person well.
- There are excellent relationships between the young person and staff.
- The young person likes the staff and enjoys their company.
- The young person is supported particularly well with their emotional well-being and anxieties.
- The home is managed well by a 'hands-on' manager. He makes it his business to be fully aware of all events in the home.
- The manager advocates for the young person and always has their best interests at heart.
- The staff team is experienced, well trained and supported. Consequently, its members know how to meet the young person's needs.
- Strong team working assists the young person to develop to their full potential.
- While the home is judged as good, there are some shortfalls in recording. In particular, records of actions taken when the young person has been missing and recruitment records are not consistently presented to a high standard. A minority of records do not enable effective monitoring of staff's practice and young people's safety and welfare.
- Staff do not have access to the return interview after the young person has been missing, which would help staff understand the reasons for the young person going missing and help address these issues.
- Staff do not fully understand the young person's educational journey prior to the latter coming to the home. They do not understand what has gone well and past difficulties, which would help inform future decisions about learning.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
Ensure that individuals are only employed to work at the children's home if there is full and satisfactory information available in relation to each of the matters listed in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d), Schedule 2) This is in particular relation to recruitment records, which do not always reflect the robustness of checks.	09/04/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to understand each child's education and training targets and next steps for learning. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.11)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) This is in particular relation to records of staff's actions when young people go missing.
- Ensure that where a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home is privately owned and registered to care for one young person who has emotional and behavioural needs (EBD).

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/a		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>The young person has become more settled over time since moving to this home. Their risk-taking behaviours have decreased. This is because the staff team and management show patience, tenacity and drive to ensure that the young person progresses well. The staff and manager reported positively about the young person's progress, with one saying: 'They are really engaging now.'</p> <p>The young person has not been able to access education, due to their high-risk behaviour and anxiety. However, they are well prepared and supported by staff in readiness for their return to a learning environment. Together, they break down barriers to learning before they occur. One social worker commented positively about this, reporting a 'proactive approach'. Strategies are developed together with the young person, and there are plans in place to restart their learning journey. There is a lack of information about their past educational history, achievements and learning style. Opportunities could be missed to build on these areas, as staff do not know what has worked well in the past and how to optimise learning.</p> <p>The emotional well-being of the young person is a high priority for staff. Staff have an understanding of the young person's journey before the latter came to the home. The young person is assisted to make sense of their complex feelings about their personal and family situation. When they feel anxious or frustrated, quality time is spent with them talking about the best way forward. When they need additional support with regard to their mental health, the home ensures that this is readily available. The organisation's own psychologist regularly visits the home and the young person readily engages with them. In addition, other relevant mental health services are brought in to further complement this support.</p> <p>The young person readily discusses their health with staff. Staff encourage a very open culture, where young people can discuss whatever they like. This reduces embarrassment and enables the young person to learn about how they should look after each aspect of their health, including sexual health, medication, healthy eating, dental care and self-harming behaviours. The young person's health has improved because of staff's support in this area.</p> <p>The young person's improved behaviour allows for them to better access their community. Activities they have been able to do include ice skating, bowling and meals out. The young person enjoys these experiences; it has also allowed them to demonstrate how they can behave positively in the community, while being supported by staff. Planning for the young person's independence is good. There is always a momentum of progress. Even when the young person has no free time</p>	

because of the risks they present, staff work well with them to ensure that they develop the skills they need for the future. The inspector observed the young person shopping, budgeting, washing and learning skills they will need in the future.

Staff support the young person well to keep in touch with people who are important to them. The young person's family has regularly praised staff for their support with contact visits, which are managed well. Staff have worked well with the young person's placing social worker to increase contact, where they have expressed a wish to see more of a family member. This has enabled them to develop relationships with family that they can continue in the future, developing a positive support network for when they leave care.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The young person has made good progress with their risk-taking behaviour from their starting point. One social worker's comments include: 'They have made massive improvements; staff are working to keep them safe.' Where they regularly went missing before, instances of this behaviour have reduced over a period of time. Staff work hard to ensure that the young person engages with them about aspects of their safety, particularly in relation to their behaviour and when they go missing. It is acknowledged that some behaviours are embedded and that these behaviours will not change overnight. However, staff are tenacious and never give up on the young person, always having the latter's safety at the forefront of their practice.</p> <p>The young person is safer because of the quality of information shared with their placing authority. Placing social workers can make informed decisions because of the good-quality information that they receive. Where the young person has expressed concerns about their past or about staff, the home's own child protection procedures and the area procedures are consistently followed. This ensures that appropriate professionals can make important decisions in relation to safety and welfare. Staff know that it is their responsibility to safeguard young people, but also know when to pass safeguarding issues on to the relevant professionals.</p> <p>Risk assessments, although basic, are clear and individual. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable about what they must do to reduce risk. The manager is aware of one occasion where the police were not called early enough when the young person was missing, but has taken steps to ensure that this will not happen again through discussion with staff and changing procedures in the home.</p>	

When the young person has been missing, staff have done everything they can to search for them. The young person receives a formal return interview when they have returned, but the reports are not available in the home for the manager or staff to learn from. This means that opportunities are lost to keep the young person safer next time they go missing. The minority of records inspected did not fully reflect what happened and when during periods of going missing, making it difficult for the manager to measure staff practice and young people's welfare.

The young person's behaviour is managed very well. They reflected that they felt safer because of staff actions, particularly in relation to when restraint was needed. When restraints are carried out, this is only ever to protect individuals. This has assisted the young person to develop a sense of safety and trust in staff. The young person spoke to the inspector about their improved behaviour. They talked about how staff had assisted them to develop more positive strategies at times when this has been previously difficult for them to manage.

Staff recruitment is managed effectively, ensuring that the young person is as protected as they can be from unsuitable people. Recording of this process does not always reflect the robustness of the procedures followed, though. The manager cannot always monitor the safety of his staff team robustly, especially where the process has been managed by other managers within the organisation.

High staffing ratios are available when needed to support the young person. Staff manage this very positively, ensuring that the young person is still able to have their own space. The young person is supervised extremely well.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager was appointed to manage the home when it was registered with Ofsted in September 2016. He is appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out his role effectively. He is a 'hands-on' manager and makes it his business to be involved in the care of the young person, in order to monitor the home effectively. He is able to model good practice and to monitor staff performance and the quality of care, through his inclusive and open management style.</p> <p>The organisation arranges for an independent visitor to visit the home to do its own inspection, once a month. These visits are thorough. Recommendations are received well by the manager and staff, and help to drive improvement.</p> <p>Multi-agency working is a priority and the manager and staff regularly advocate for</p>	

the young person. This ensures that their progress is not disrupted wherever possible. For example, the manager has worked well to ensure that the young person has been able to build a relationship with professionals whom they will work with in the near future during a forthcoming legal process. This will help to reduce the young person's anxiety and ensure the best outcome for them.

The young person is able to let staff and the manager know how they feel and their voice is heard. They know that they can make a complaint if they wish and when this happens, the manager gives this priority. He writes back to the young person and meets with them to discuss their concerns, so that they feel heard. The young person has been assisted to voice their views in a more positive way, making their attitude more socially acceptable. They learn how to have their say about their own life and the operation of the home. This has given them confidence to advocate for themselves in an effective and appropriate way.

Staff feel well supported and are managed well. Their comments include, 'We receive support 100%,' and, 'I am well supported.' When staff are new, they receive an induction. They are mentored by more experienced staff, as they learn about policies, procedures and how to meet the young person's needs. The manager ensures that each member of staff receives the training they need, to provide good-quality care to the young person. Training includes mandatory training on topics such as behaviour management and safeguarding. Staff development is also enhanced by other specific training around the young person's individual needs, such as self-harm, and various aspects of mental health. Staff attribute the young person's progress to the quality of support that they receive from the manager, the organisation and each other. They said: 'We are a good team,' 'We support each other,' and, 'I love it.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people, and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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