

1264438

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates and runs this home. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home was registered in December 2017. There is an acting manager in post who is in the process of completing an application to be registered.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 December 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: 22 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2019	Full	Inadequate
07/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/08/2018	Full	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 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—</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to appropriate cover arrangements being in place when the manager is absent from the home.</p>	10/01/2020
<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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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> <p>In particular, the manager should evaluate all significant incidents to determine any future learning and strengthen practice.</p>	10/01/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
In particular, ensure that the opinions are sought of children, young people, parents, staff and other professionals involved in the children's and young people's care to support the review of the quality of care.
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
In particular, ensure that the manager is involved in the decision to admit a child into the home and in all cases an impact risk assessment is completed prior to the admission.
- A warm welcome and introduction to the home are an entitlement for all children whether they are admitted in a planned way or in an emergency. Where possible other children and young people should be supported to contribute to the design of the welcome and introduction and where appropriate the welcome itself. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.7)
This is with particular reference to the home's pre-admission policy providing clarity to children and staff when new children and young people come to live at the home.

Inspection judgements

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

At the last inspection, the home was judged inadequate with eight requirements and one recommendation. At this inspection, the home has taken the necessary steps to meet the requirements and has started on a journey of improvement. The new manager had only been in post two weeks at the time of this inspection. Therefore, it is encouraging to see the plans in place, but not enough time has passed to fully evidence the impact the home is having on the young people's lives. At the time of the inspection, two young people had only just come to live at the home.

Since the last inspection, one child has successfully transitioned from the home to a 'forever family' and is settling well. The previous manager was proactive in providing ongoing support. In addition, the child remains in touch with the home and with a young

person still living there. Staff recognise the importance of nurturing and maintaining established relationships between the child and the young person.

In the absence of the manager, one young person was matched and placed in the home without a detailed impact assessment. In addition, a young person felt ill informed and let down that she had not been consulted in advance. The manager has taken steps to rectify this shortfall and is assured that such actions will not happen in the future.

Young people living at the home are able to build warm and trusting relationships with a motivated albeit relatively new staff team. Staff demonstrate a conscientious desire to provide care that meets the young people's diverse and complex needs. Young people who are very new to the home are welcomed and are settling down well. One young person said: 'I am really happy that I have moved to this home.'

One young person is making excellent progress in her independence due to the diligence and support of the staff team. As a result, the young person's confidence in her abilities has increased. A member of staff commented: '[Name of young person] will often cook for all the staff and young people. She is budgeting well, doing her own laundry and is trusted to travel independently.'

Education and further training are actively promoted and encouraged. Two young people are continuing to attend school and college in their home area. This has helped to maintain friendship groups and family ties. The acting manager has been proactive in liaising with the virtual school service to ensure that one young person does not miss out on her education.

Young people are given opportunities to enjoy a range of activities that promotes a healthy lifestyle, such as cooking healthy meals, going to the gym and ice skating.

The environment of the home is warm and homely. Young people have choice in how they want to decorate their rooms and in personalising their home. The acting manager has very recently implemented child-friendly consultation forms to inform the home's practice and is committed to meeting with the young people regularly to ascertain their views.

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

Safeguarding practice has improved since the last inspection. Although there has been no cause to restrain a young person, all staff have undergone training and are confident in the use of approved methods of physical intervention. The acting manager has used team meetings and supervision to further enhance staff's understanding of physical intervention being a last resort and proportionate to the situation.

Staff spoken to demonstrated a clear understanding of the complex needs of the young people in their care. Although safeguarding incidents have been few, their responses and actions taken have been well coordinated. Young people who have attempted to leave

the home have been followed by staff and successfully encouraged to return. In the absence of the acting manager, oversight and evaluation of these incidents have been lacking, and in one situation the on-call manager was unavailable. This lack of monitoring does not promote a shared understanding between the relatively new staff team and the manager. It is a missed opportunity to strengthen and improve practice.

Risk assessments and care plans have improved and have addressed the shortfalls identified in the last inspection. Young people new to the home have immediately been risk assessed, and all statutory processes following admission have been completed. These intervening risk assessments lack strategies for monitoring young people when there is a risk of, for example, self-harm. This could potentially result in inconsistencies in staff practice.

All staff have now received training in physical intervention and other specialised training in areas such as self-harm, all forms of exploitation and equality and diversity. Staff reported this to be good-quality, face-to-face training that consolidates practice and has helped them to meet the complex needs of the young people in their care.

Safer recruitment practice has been addressed, and there is a clear process in place. All staff are subject to careful vetting prior to starting work in the home. This ensures that only those suitable to work with vulnerable young people do so.

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

The provider has appointed a new manager to run the home, who is in the early stages of applying to be registered. She had been in post for two weeks at the start of this inspection. Equally, there has been a focused attempt at recruiting permanent staff, and this is beginning to afford stability of care to the young people. Induction and recruitment processes are safe, robust and comprehensive.

The manager is suitably qualified and holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She presents as honest and transparent and fully understands the strengths and weaknesses identified at the last inspection. She has a clear action plan and is committed to securing and maintaining improvements in service delivery.

There is a good balance of experience and knowledge in this newly formed diverse team of staff. New staff follow a suitable induction and probation pathway. This requires them to gather evidence and demonstrate their levels of competency before being signed out of their probationary period.

More recently, staffing skills and knowledge have started to improve, although the manager recognises the need to embed practice. Additional training has been implemented and reflective work undertaken. This has helped to address some of the shortfalls in practice.

The staff team said that they are very well supported in their role by the manager. They have regular supervision and team meetings. This ensures that they are well equipped to

meet the individual needs of the young people placed in the home. Staff reported that they work well as a team and morale is improving.

The home does not have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective day-to-day leadership when the manager is absent. As a result, some records are not maintained to the same standard and monitoring is not effective.

Staff reported good-quality supervisions and feel able to rely on the support of the manager when required, both on a personal and professional level. Working patterns have recently been changed to give the young people more consistent care and to ensure that staff have a good work-life balance. Team meetings have addressed issues raised in the last inspection.

Issues relating to both internal and external monitoring of the home have been acted on. Consultation with independent visitors to the home will hopefully improve the timeliness of reports being submitted to the regulator and other relevant individuals. The manager has also implemented procedures to include the views and opinions of the children, parents, staff and other professionals. However, this remains untested.

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: 1264438

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd.

Registered provider address: Flat 17, Leeland Mansions, Leeland Road, London, Middlesex W13 9HE

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector
Ceri Evans, social care inspector

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