

2588370

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate three young people with social and emotional difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation. The home was registered earlier this year, and this is the first visit to the home.

Visit dates: 12 to 13 October 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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 did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The children at this home are beginning to settle. Children are supported to invest in relationships with staff and staff have a good understanding of their needs.

Children have developed positive relationships with staff. This has led to children feeling able to open up and share past experiences with staff.

Children have been supported to make progress in the short period of time that they have lived at the home. Children who have not previously engaged in education are now engaging, despite the challenges of COVID-19. Children aspire for the future and are being supported to achieve their goals.

COVID-19 safety arrangements have been managed appropriately. Staff report feeling well supported and they report that children have coped well with the situation. Staff feel that the time has been positive for staff and young people and relationships have thrived during this time.

Some children are supported to see people who matter to them. Plans are monitored and reviewed in line with children's views and well-being. When plans for contact have not been progressed by the placing authority, this has not always been challenged and escalated to the managers at the home.

Children's emotional health and well-being needs are recognised and identified. For some children, there has been a delay in their accessing specialist children and mental health services.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risks and keep children safe. The positive relationships between staff and children and the understanding of potential risks have helped to reduce the numbers of incidents.

Children who have previously been at potential risk, by going missing from the home, have been supported to reduce their episodes of going missing.

The children living together are currently well matched. The home opened during the COVID-19 pandemic and matching processes were unsatisfactory. This led to a difficult period for some children. Leaders and managers acknowledged this and acted to stabilise the home. The newly formed staff team has learned from this. Revised plans for future placement matching are yet to be implemented with no new child moving into the home.

Staff understand the risks for some children with complex emotional health and well-being needs. When incidents arise, there is a prompt response and all relevant agencies are informed. Protective factors are in place to reduce risks.

Leaders and managers

The home has a registered manager who is supported by a deputy manager. Staff report the registered manager to be a good role model and mentor.

The registered manager has addressed matters arising from complaints. There is evidence of how these have been progressed. Children have made complaints during this period and these are recorded and responded to. Children report being sensitive to living in a group environment. Children say that staff are not always respectful of their rights to privacy. Staff are not always conscious of the sensitivities around sharing children's personal information.

The home benefits from a core group of staff who offer consistent care for children. During the pandemic, staff have worked well together. Staff have provided stability and safety measures are currently in place for children. Staff have not been sufficiently trained in understanding and delivering a positive ethos and culture within the home as set out in its statement of purpose.

Stakeholder feedback was positive about the manager and team. Feedback highlights that children have made progress in the relatively short period of time that they have been in placement. Positive leadership is reported in terms of management of safeguarding processes and good levels of communication with other agencies.

The manager has responded to external scrutiny. An independent visitor has visited the home regularly, but the reports have not been forwarded to Ofsted.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to	20/11/20

be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) This refers to the manager escalating matters with other agencies that have an impact on any child's care plans. Specifically, delays in contact arrangements and delays in accessing specialist support services.	
If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report— details of the conflict of interest; and the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI; upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; the placing authorities of children; the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44 (6)(a)(7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	20/11/20

Recommendations

- Children in residential care usually live in a group environment, and so it is particularly important that they can spend time away from other group members. Staff should respect children's privacy and support the other children living in the

home to do so. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.17)

- The registered person is responsible for leading a team which provides high quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)
- 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. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2588370

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Shaun Carr

Inspector

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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