

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC038780
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Blue Mountain Homes Ltd
Registered person address	17 Leeland Mansions Leeland Road London W13 9HB
Responsible individual	Pradeep Kumar Manaktala
Registered manager	Shaun Geraghty Hicks
Date of last inspection	01/08/2013

Inspection date	08/05/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued on 12 July 2013. A further full inspection took place on the 1 August 2013 and all compliance notices had been complied with. A monitoring visit took place on 3 October 2013 and concluded that the home had sustained improvements.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	inadequate
Keeping children and young people safe	inadequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
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Leadership and management is a significant weakness of the home. This impacts negatively on the quality of care provided to children and young people. However, young people achieve adequate outcomes despite this.

This inspection has found the management of the home has not been effective, resulting in shortfalls in a number of areas. The key shortfall is regarding the Registered Managers ability to promote improvement in the home. Improvements are needed are in relation to: sufficient staffing of the home; ensuring the security of the home; management monitoring systems; safe recruitment practice; ensuring regular staff supervision; provision of appropriate staff training; missing from care policies; maintenance of the home and ensuring Ofsted is notified of all significant events. Additionally, the manager has failed to communicate with local authorities in regards to the placements of young people. Improvements are also required in the

dietary arrangements for young people; and consistency in behaviour management strategies. This means that quality of care is inadequate and young people's safety and well-being is compromised.

Despite the areas of improvement needed, young people are supported to gain an understanding of their background and develop a positive sense of their own identity, and are cared for in line with their local authority care plans. They receive support in attending education provision, engaging with social care and youth justice agencies and in maintaining contact with their families.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to four young people. The home is registered to provide care for young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2013	Full	adequate
19/06/2013	Full	inadequate
22/08/2012	Full	good
28/02/2012	Interim	inadequate progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
9 (2001)	ensure the registered provider and the registered manager shall, having regard to the size of the children's home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children accommodated there, carry on or manage the home (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill (Regulation 9 (1))	29/05/2014
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there. This specifically relates to ensuring sufficient permanent	29/05/2014

	staff and ensuring any use of agency and relief staff does not prevent continuity of care (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	
13 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the children's home are provided with food which is wholesome, nutritious, and suitable for their needs (Regulation 13 (1) (a))	29/05/2014
16 (2001)	ensure the registered person implements a missing child policy Regulation 16 (4) (b) & (5) (i) (ii)	29/05/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that the home implements a written policy (in this regulation referred to as the "behaviour management policy") which sets out the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the home (Regulation 17B (1) (b))	29/05/2014
25 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that the employment of any persons on a temporary basis at the children's home will not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. Regulation 25 (2)	29/05/2014
26 (2001)	ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to any person who works in the home who in the course of his duties has regular contact with children accommodated there in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. This specifically relates to agency staff (Regulation 26 (3)(d))	29/05/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. This is with particular reference to mandatory training for all staff, including agency staff and ensuring adequate supervision arrangements for all of the staff team (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	29/05/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in the respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	29/05/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31,2 (e))	29/05/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by the children are secure from unauthorised access, with specific reference to ensuring that all visitors have their identification checked (Regulation 31 (2) (b))	29/05/2014
33	ensure the independent person's report	29/05/2014

(2001)	recommends actions that the registered person may take in relation to the children's home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. Specifically in relation to the registered person taking timely action in response to the actions identified. Regulation 33 (10)	
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. This system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b) (3))	29/05/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff understand, share and implement the home's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children, specifically in relation to consistent behaviour management practice (NMS 3.4)
- ensure all staff, volunteers and the registered person, are properly managed, supported and understand to whom they are accountable. With specific reference to ensuring regular team meetings to achieve these aims (NMS 19.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people's attendance at school and educational achievement is generally good given their starting points. They attend the providers own school or alternative provision. Young people benefit from educational placements that are suitable for their individual needs. As a result, young people are able to achieve their educational potential.

Some young people are reluctant to engage in their own healthcare, or continue to engage in risk taking behaviours and substance misuse, despite advice, guidance and support provided by staff. Young people are up to date with their medical appointments and are able to access services to address their specific health needs.

Young people enjoy a range of activities and enjoy relaxing at home and watching television. They participate in activities such as fishing and go karting, which provide an enjoyable experience, as well as promoting self-esteem.

A particular strength of the home is the promotion of contact with families and significant individuals. Young people benefit from appropriate contact arrangements with their parents, family and friends, which enables positive attachments to be maintained or rebuilt. Arrangements are clearly recorded and contact is facilitated to ensure young people enjoy their contact and remain safe. Social workers are positive in their views about the promotion of contact.

Independence skills are developed with young people undertaking some activities in the home. They learn to develop basic practical and life skills such as cooking, laundry and cleaning and arranging interviews and appointments. This means young people receive adequate support that helps them prepare for adulthood.

Quality of care **inadequate**

Despite significant staff changes, there are some positive relationships between the staff and young people. This enables some young people to make positive relationships with staff which promotes the development of appropriate and affirming attachments.

Various areas of the home require maintenance work. Some areas of the home are well decorated, furnished and maintained. However, several areas of the home are in need of maintenance. For example, the entrance to the home had a badly damaged front door, there was writing on brickwork and discarded cigarette ends on the outside of the building. Internally, further areas of improvement were identified, such

as an en-suite bathroom requiring a rigorous cleaning, communal hallway and landings appearing 'tired' and in need of renovation. These issues within the home detract from a homely feel for young people.

Young people have access to a range of medical professionals including mental health specialists, opticians and dentists. Staff encourage young people to identify their health needs and how best to meet these.

However, the homes menu planning is not of a good quality, with a lack of variety and minimal provision of fresh fruit and vegetables. While this has not had a direct impact on the health of the young people, it has the potential to affect their health.

Young people receive a children's guide that contains information on their care, advocacy, and the details of people they contact if they wish to raise a concern. Internal complaints procedures are understood and young people have access to their own telephones to make private calls. This enables them to express any concerns they may have independently of the staff team.

Professionals working with the home give generally positive feedback about the care provided. They confirm that staff are proactive in supporting young people to meet their health and educational needs and encouraging their positive behaviours. They also say staff communicate and work well with them. A professional said of the staff team: 'The team have persevered with the young person and they work very well with me, the family and the young person'.

The staff team working with the young people are diverse in ethnicity and culture, provide a broad age range, and gender mix. Young people are therefore enabled, by suitable staff to access services and resources relating to their individual needs.

The home is located in an urban area, with close links for public transport. The building is appropriately designed to take into the account the needs of the young people.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

The home is not sufficiently appropriately secure to meet the needs of young people. For example, the inspector gained access to the home without staff requesting evidence of relevant identification. This has the potential for young people's safety to be compromised by unchecked individuals.

Physical intervention is a method of behaviour management used in the home only where necessary. When used it is used in accordance with the legislative framework. Staff who undertake physical interventions are suitably trained, and equipped with the skills to de-escalate situations. Incidents of physical interventions have been recorded in line with regulatory requirements.

Staff endeavour to promote positive behaviour with some young people who demonstrate highly challenging behaviours. In some circumstances, behaviour management plans are not consistently implemented. Consequently, behaviour management techniques are not always effective and young people fail to develop a better understanding of expected behaviours and learn how to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.

The selection and vetting procedures in relation to staff working in the home ensures the home has detailed recruitment information for its permanent staff. However, there is insufficient information in respect of the agency staff used in the home. This means safer recruitment practice is not consistent and as a result, young people are not adequately safeguarded.

There have been no allegations made since the last inspection and young people report no incidents of bullying within the home.

The environment is safe and ensures the well-being of young people. All electrical and gas appliances are regularly checked and the home has clear risk assessments for specific activities. Regular fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. This means young people are aware how to evacuate safely in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The manager became registered in this post in January 2010. He has a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 in Leadership and Management for Care services which is a suitable qualification for the post of Registered Manager. He has relevant experience of residential childcare within the private sector.

This inspection finds that there have been significant shortfalls and a failure to promote improvement. This illustrates that leaders and managers do not fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of practice within the home.

The manager has not satisfactorily addressed all of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection.

The requirement to update the statement of purpose has been undertaken. This means it accurately reflects the aims, ethos and facilities offered to young people and their parents and carers. Staff records have been improved and provide a more up to date account of staff training.

The recommendation to provide a reviewed development plan has not been achieved. The history of recent inadequate and adequate judgments necessitates a formal plan to provide a clear picture of how the manager will promote improvement. Current arrangements fail to provide sufficient detail as to how the service can

effectively develop in relation to improving upon outcomes for children and young people. The home therefore lacks direction and does not promote improvement.

Procedures and policy relating to young people missing from care remain incompatible with current statutory guidance and local police protocols. This means that the home cannot ensure effective action when young people go missing.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes with the staff team with some staff leaving and new staff joining. Consequently, staff from the provider's other homes are routinely used to provide support. Additionally, the home uses agency staff to provide additional staff support. This has resulted in insufficient permanent staff members, which has led to young people and staff highlighting that there is no 'team'. Consequently, young people do not benefit from consistency in care.

The provider ensures that required external quality assurance checks are conducted on a monthly basis to monitor the quality of care. A report about these visits is sent regularly to Ofsted. The reports have identified a number of shortfalls in the standard of care and monitoring of the home. However, the Registered Manager has failed to rectify identified issues in a timely manner. This has had a direct negative impact on the quality of care provided to young people.

The Registered Manager's own monitoring of the home is ineffective. The review of care is not sufficiently evaluative and does not provide detailed information on how the home can improve. In addition, the internal monitoring system fails to consult with young people or stakeholders as part of its process. This means the quality of care and welfare of young people is not sufficiently monitored.

Staff training is available on general topics such as safeguarding, fire safety awareness, health and safety, medication and restraint, although not all staff have completed these courses. This means staff are not sufficiently competent to meet the needs of young people. Because of the shortfalls in staff training, the welfare and protection of young people is inadequately safeguarded.

Staff do not receive regular and up-to-date supervision. This means that staff may not always be aware of their role and responsibilities, which may affect the safety of young people. Team meetings are infrequent which means that communication is not consistent enough to ensure cohesive teamwork.

Significant incidents are not consistently notified to Ofsted as required. Therefore, Ofsted cannot accurately assess how the home responds to complaints or allegations; or determine whether appropriate action is being taken to safeguard the welfare of young people.

The Registered Manager is clear about the admission criteria for young people and scrutinises referrals. However, the management team have failed to notify the local authority of the admission and discharge of young people into the home. This means

the local authority cannot be clear on the needs of the young people placed within the area and the potential services, which will be required.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.