

SC038780

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to four children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of state, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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: 27 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2019	Full	Good
18/04/2018	Full	Good
04/05/2017	Full	Good
13/12/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are receiving good care from a staff team that understands their needs very well. Children develop a sense of belonging and have trusting relationships with those caring for them. Due to the commitment of the manager and staff, the children make progress in many areas of their lives. Children know their rights. They know how to make complaints, should they feel aggrieved. The manager ensures that actions are taken to respond to any complaints in a timely manner. Consequently, children feel listened to and confident that their concerns are addressed effectively.

Children make good progress in education. One child has achieved several GCSEs and is now planning to go to college. Staff support the child to attend education and complete work at home. When children experience anxiety over attending and engaging in education, the manager and staff help them to work through their difficulties. This ensures that children maintain full-time education and/or training.

Children's health needs are managed well. Children are supported to attend appointments to maintain physical and emotional well-being. Some children are using alcohol and drugs. The manager has enlisted the support of specialist services. As a result, children become more aware of the risks to their health and well-being, and they are now engaging in plans to tackle this issue.

The manager has not provided sufficient oversight of managing medications. A shortfall was identified. The manager has a plan in place to rectify this.

The manager and staff ensure that children spend time with family, who are often at some distance away. Staff support children by transporting them and remaining in the area, if required. The effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to keep children safe and communications could be further strengthened in response to contact arrangements.

Children stay in touch after they have left the home. For example, staff provide regular support to one child who is now living independently. This is testament to the strength of the relationships children develop with the manager and staff.

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

The manager and staff have good awareness and understanding of the child's individual vulnerabilities, risks and needs. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are detailed and reviewed regularly. However, there was an incident where staff did not respond well to an emerging concern. Managers have taken swift action to ensure that this shortfall has been addressed and that valuable lessons are learned.

Overall, the staff manage situations and behaviour well, making good use of their skills and training. They use restraints where needed to prevent harm and damage to property. The manager and staff record restraints thoroughly, and debriefs are undertaken with children and staff involved. Children say that they understand why restraints are used to keep them safe. This demonstrates the effectiveness of debriefs with all those involved.

The manager and staff respond well when children are missing. They stay in contact with children, where possible. When this is not effective, staff work with family and the relevant partner agencies to ensure children are found and returned home safely. Over time, this leads to a reduction in missing incidents.

Children are cared for by safe adults. There is a stable staff team and minimal use of temporary staffing. This means children experience consistent care. Children speak with confidence about the staff. One child said that they are 'well coordinated' and that he always knows who is going to be looking after him. As a result, children feel safe because they have carers they can trust.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a long-standing manager who has invested considerable time and energy into the home. The manager shows great passion towards helping children. This shapes the ethos of the home and is translated into the day-to-day care of children. The children speak very highly of the manager and say the home is 'the best they have lived in'.

The staff say they enjoy working at the home. They have confidence in the manager. They benefit from regular supervision, which is particularly helpful for new members of staff. There are good systems in place for staff who experience difficulties. The manager has implemented individualised 'well-being at work plans' to support staff who experience physical or mental health difficulties.

The manager has good working relationships with external agencies. There is regular communication regarding significant events. Professionals praise the manager for the quality of care offered to children and say the home 'goes above and beyond' to support children.

Overall, the manager ensures children are well supported when moving into and out of the home. Where there are difficulties with transitions, the manager and staff meet with relevant agencies and adjust plans, to make certain they are meeting children's needs. The manager has, however, accepted some children without completing an objective assessment as to whether the home is the best place to meet their needs. The manager has reflected on this issue and is planning to adjust their approach in the future.

The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the home. She identifies where there are areas for development and addresses shortfalls in practice. The

manager uses her own professional supervision to raise issues with senior managers when she feels this is required.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that staff always follow risk assessments and report serious incidents to relevant agencies.	27 November 2021
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that staff record medications administered in a format that is clear and provides an accurate record.	27 November 2021

Recommendations

- 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)
- The registered person should ensure that children's homes staff assess that restriction of contact is necessary in the interests of the child, to safeguard them or promote their welfare. This decision should not be taken lightly and must be agreed with the placing authority, where possible, except in an emergency situation, where the placing authority must be notified within 24 hours. (See regulation 22 (5) and (6)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 58, paragraph 11.16)

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: SC038780

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blue Mountain Homes Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Pradeep Manaktala

Registered manager: Lisa Owens

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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