

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	19/06/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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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
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form, which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; is kept up to date and is signed and dated by the author of each written entry (Regulation 28(1))	11/07/2014
31 (2001)	ensure the children's home is suitably furnished to meet the need of the children accommodated and achieve the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose, with specific reference to the provision of appropriate seating furniture and	11/07/2014

	ensuring damaged fridge is replaced (Regulation 31 (4) (a) (b))	
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept good structural repair externally and internally, with specific reference to the paving in the rear garden and the upkeep and safety in the grounds to the rear of the property. (Regulation 31(2)(d))	11/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people understand how their views have been taken into account, and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why (NMS 1.2)
- ensure children exercise choice in the food they eat and are able to prepare their own meals and snacks, with the limits that a reasonable parent would set (NMS 2.4)
- ensure the home feeds back to the responsible authority any significant reaction a child has to contact arrangements or visits with any person, with specific reference to travel arrangements to support family contact (NMS 9.5)
- ensure that children are supported to prepare for moving into their own accommodation, develop practical skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, and understanding and taking responsibility for personal healthcare. To also develop financial capability, knowledge and skills. (NMS 12.1 (d)(e)(f))
- ensure the home contributes to the development of each child's care plan, including the pathway plan for 'eligible' care leavers and works collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal adviser in implementing the plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of Placement Plans recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at home arising from reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25.8)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people develop an improved understanding of themselves and the reasons for their behaviours. They gain knowledge and understanding of their background and history through key work sessions and work with staff. As a result, young people benefit from improved emotional resilience and develop a positive self-view.

Young people progress in education in relation to their starting points. They attend the provider's own school or alternative education provision. Educational outcomes improve as school attendance improves. Improvements in behaviour mean young people settle in class and learn more effectively. This means young people can gradually increase their time in school and receive fuller educational packages. Consequently, some young people benefit from improved educational outcomes.

Overall, young people are in good physical and emotional health. Some young people are reluctant to attend routine medical appointments. Additionally, health outcomes are compromised with some young people engaging in behaviours such as smoking and drug use. However, they benefit from advice, guidance and support by staff and alternative external agencies. This means that they have an understanding of key health risks.

Young people engage in appropriate contact arrangements with their parents, family and friends. They enjoy contact, but some report difficulties in practical arrangements to support contacts. In such circumstances, it would be good practice for the home to liaise with the responsible authority on such issues.

Young people undertake some activities in the home to develop basic practical and life skills. This means young people receive adequate care that helps them prepare for adulthood. However, young people would benefit from a more structured approach to promoting independence, which would be helped by pathway plans being created from placing authorities. This would enable young people to have their needs assessed and reviewed, with appropriate levels of support and guidance provided. This would lead to young people effectively acquiring skills necessary for independence.

Quality of care **adequate**

Staff ensure they provide an environment where young people experience clear and consistent boundaries. This means young people, over time, learn to moderate negative behaviours. This enables them to sustain stability in their placements and develop sound relationships with staff and other young people.

Young people's care plans, placement plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and include all of the young person's needs, including those relating to identity. Staff encourage young people to be involved in their care planning, which means that they understand the plans that are in place to support them. However, records from statutory reviews are not always pursued or in case records. Consequently, it is difficult to understand what decisions were made and how the home has progressed these actions.

Young people talk about their care in key work sessions and at house meetings. They also know how to make a complaint. However, some young people say they do not feel their views are always taken seriously. For example, young people express their wishes and choices within young person's meetings but do not always receive a response. As a result, young people do not adequately influence their care or the running of the home.

Staff are proactive in supporting and encouraging young people to improve their health. Health care plans for some young people present as being out-of-date and not having received recent reviews or updates. Records do not reflect support provided to encourage young people to access relevant health care. However, young people are well supported by staff to engage in their own health care. The home provides an environment where young people can access universal services to promote their physical, emotional and psychological health.

At the time of the inspection, there were no young people taking prescribed medication. Medication arrangements are safe with secure storage and appropriate recording processes. A training programme is in place to ensure all staff have medication training. This means the arrangements for dealing with medication are effective.

Staff promote education and encourage young people to go to school by getting them up on time, taking them to school and providing support and encouragement if needed. As a result, school attendance and engagement have improved.

Young people have choice in their activities and benefit from engaging with staff in activities such as fishing and quad biking. They can go out locally to parks and leisure centres independently. This promotes their engagement within the community and develops their skills, both socially and physically.

The home is well located in an urban residential area. It is a home with good security and provides a homely environment, with easy access to facilities.

Keeping children and young people safe **adequate**

Young people are safe and feel safe. Records reflect a commitment to safeguarding, with detailed and regularly reviewed risk assessments. Consequently adjustments to risk assessments reflect the changing needs of yp.

Incidents of risks taking behaviours, such as going missing from the home are low. Staff demonstrate good levels of understanding of the factors leading to young people going missing from care. When such incidents occur, they take necessary and timely action to inform relevant agencies and are proactive in their efforts to contact and locate the young person. The 'missing from care' policy is being reviewed by the local police service. This will ensure the providers' policy is compatible with current statutory guidance and protocols. This means the home can continue to ensure effective action when young people go missing.

A key priority has been that all staff attend safeguarding training. Additional training on safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, sexually harmful behaviour and drug misuse enhance staff skills to deal with complex safeguarding issues. Young people are safer because of staff having robust training and understanding of safeguarding issues.

There is no reported bullying in the home. Staff address this effectively by being vigilant and in high levels of staff monitoring.

Improvements to behaviour management have been implemented since the last inspection and better reflect the guidance within the provider's behaviour management policy. Consequently, young people benefit from a behaviour management approach understood by staff and young people. The home is committed to ensuring young people are not criminalised due to negative behaviours. They use a range of behaviour management strategies, including reward, incentive and sanctions. Consequently, young people learn over time how to improve behaviours.

The use of physical restraint in the home is minimal. In the event of a situation requiring restraint, all staff are suitably trained to undertake physical interventions with regular refresher training. Records of restraints are in line with the legislative framework.

Recruitment procedures in relation to staff working in the home ensures the home maintains detailed recruitment information for all staff. Staff employed to work in the home have a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. Robust recruitment processes and the rigorous monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm. This means recruitment practice is safe and consistent and as a result, young people are adequately safeguarded.

All required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner. As a result, the building is safe, appropriately secure and young people are protected.

Leadership and management

adequate

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.

The last full inspection of this home resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate. There were 13 requirements and two recommendations set at the last inspection. The manager has satisfactorily addressed all of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. This illustrates that leaders and managers are able to promote improvement and understand the strengths and weaknesses of practice within the home.

The Registered Manager's development plan is more detailed. It better outlines how the service can effectively develop. This relates directly to improving upon outcomes for young people. This means improvement plans are specific and measurable and provide a clear tool to promote improvement.

The management team have improved the internal and external monitoring arrangements. This means that identified shortfalls are rectified in a timely manner, therefore promoting an improved quality of care.

The manager has implemented improved working arrangements with the local authority. The local authority is notified of all young people admitted or discharged from the home. This means that the local authority is now aware of the young people accommodated in the home and the potential impact on local resources.

The manager has ensured all responsible authorities and Ofsted are notified of any significant incidents. Consequently, social care professionals and the regulator can adequately review the care of young people.

Improvements with staffing arrangements include the recruitment of new staff to ensure the home has a core team of permanent staff and this ensures that the home does not rely on the use of agency staff and improves the consistency of care for young people.

Staff now benefit from regular supervision and the provision of mandatory training. These combined processes have led to a better-supported and knowledgeable staff team.

Security arrangements for the home have been improved with all staff now aware of the need to verify identification prior to allowing individuals access to the home. This means the home is a safe environment, which protects young people from potentially

unsafe individuals.

The interior of the home has improved in accordance with the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. However, areas of improvement identified within this inspection, relate to damaged external paving and poor garden maintenance. Additionally, there is a need to replace a damaged fridge and well-worn settee. This means requirements have been set to address these separate shortfalls.

Menu planning is now more pertinent to ensuring that young people receive a balanced and nutritious diet. Additional monitoring from the manager, also adds to improving the diet of young people. These actions fulfil the previous requirement. A recommendation has been set to allow young people to exercise more choice in identifying food for light meals and snacks which they may wish to eat in addition to main meals.

The home demonstrates capacity for continuing improvement based on its record of accomplishment and performance since the last inspection.

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.