

SC047978

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 operated by a private company and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children with emotional, behavioural and/or mental health difficulties. The manager has been in post since 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 9 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
04/07/2018	Full	Outstanding
20/06/2017	Full	Good
02/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide a good standard of care to children who have significant mental health needs. Staff encourage the development of secure relationships that are built on trust. Children feel safer because of this.

Children can exhibit challenging behaviours at times of distress. Self-injurious behaviour is frequent. Because staff are resilient, they deliver effective care and support despite these challenges.

Children receive a good standard of professional support to help maintain their emotional health. The home has developed strong working relationships with mental health services. These relationships help staff to identify triggers for self-injurious behaviours. Specialist mental health services help children to develop safer behaviours and to self-regulate their emotions.

Maintaining contact between children and their families is recognised as important. This contact is often supported by staff in the community. During COVID-19 and lockdown, inventive measures were taken to ensure that children could still see their families regularly.

Leaders and managers continue to develop the home. Children now benefit from a large conservatory. The outside area is being developed into a seating area. However, areas of the home used by staff to store and administer medication are not sufficient in size. This means that mistakes are more likely to take place.

Not all children are in education. One young person has had no formal education since coming to this home. Although education provision has been identified, this is not due to begin for four months. Current partnership working arrangements do not prevent unnecessary delays in identifying education placements.

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

Since the last assurance visit, children have been able to access items that are a potential hazard to their health. Staff, on one occasion, had not followed children's risk assessments. This increased the risk when children were in the community. However, staff are usually vigilant, and monitoring of children is a priority. Staffing ratios are high.

Children have a very high level of support for their needs. As a result, all activities are thoroughly risk assessed. Staff balance risk with encouraging children to develop their independence skills. As a result, children learn valuable life skills in a structured, safe manner.

Care plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are good. They explain in detail the complex care needs of children. They identify risks. Managers ensure that plans are accurate by thorough and regular reviews. Staff are made aware of any changes to plans.

Staff act decisively when children attempt to go missing or attempt to put themselves at risk of harm. This often means that physical intervention is required. However, records show de-escalation techniques are always attempted in the first instance. The manager reviews all restraints. Children are always spoken with after restraints, and alternative safer patterns of behaviour are encouraged.

Missing-from-care episodes remain low. This is because staff understand the children's needs. Staff can usually predict unsafe behaviours, and they act quickly in diverting children to a more positive alternative. Staff communicate and work together to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced and qualified manager. She is ably supported by deputy managers and senior staff. As a team, they are visible within the home. Managers actively spend time with the children. Due to this, they understand the children's needs well.

Staff speak positively about working at this home. They enjoy spending time with the children, despite this being emotionally demanding. New staff say that they feel well supported by their experienced and established colleagues. Managers are accessible when needed for support and advice.

The manager ensures that staff undertake general and more specialised training. This gives staff the skills and confidence to provide a good standard of care. Due to the specific mental health needs of the children, staff have undertaken training in self-harm responses, first aid and restraint.

Staff receive regular individual supervision. This is of good quality. A central feature of supervision is ensuring that the well-being of staff is promoted. This is important due to the demanding nature of the work. Occasionally, discussions are not thorough enough when speaking about the children's progress. This means that managers and staff do not always have a formal opportunity to review the effectiveness of children's care plans.

The manager's overview of the home is usually effective. She uses formal quality assurance approaches, together with informal measures such as spending time with the staff team and children. Occasionally, these approaches have not been robust enough. They have not identified minor health and safety errors and recording errors in the administration of medication.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure- that staff- help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii)(ix)) This is to ensure that children have suitable education provision identified and are supported to access this educational provision.	16/07/2021
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 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)) This is to ensure that children are not exposed to hazards associated with gaining access to medication and to COSHH liquids that can harm them. To ensure that all staff follow the children's risk assessments.	16/07/2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to Children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC047978

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: Jane Smith

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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