

SC047978

Assurance visit

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 young people with emotional, behavioural and/or mental health difficulties.

The home is led by a registered and qualified manager.

Visit dates: 9 to 10 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 7 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Good

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

Many of the young people have fragile emotional and mental health and have, in the main, moved to this home from hospital settings. Young people are vulnerable and experience periods of distress. This includes incidents of self-injurious behaviour. Staff persevere through challenging times and provide young people with compassionate and nurturing care.

The manager and staff work with partner agencies effectively, particularly the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Practitioners from CAMHS oversee the young people's mental health care and undertake medication reviews and therapeutic work with young people. The manager ensures that regular multi-agency meetings take place, and there is good co-ordination of services between the home, the local authority and CAMHS staff. This ensures that children receive the services and care they need.

Young people know how to complain. The manager responds quickly and appropriately to any concerns raised by young people. Young people meet with staff on a weekly basis and discuss any aspect of group living and share ideas and suggestions. The manager and staff take young people's views seriously and act on their suggestions, if possible. This empowers the young people.

Young people do not have any clear educational provision. Only one young person is attending a college course. Other young people in the home have no clear education or training plans. Most young people have missed a great deal of education while in hospital. When discharged to the home, there is a gap in suitable provision being identified. Improved joint working with the local authority is required to identify resources to meet the education and training needs of young people to maximise their life chances now and for their futures.

The manager and leaders of the organisation have made several improvements to the home since the last inspection. They are in the process of building a large conservatory to the rear of the building. This will be a welcome addition to this already comfortable and homely environment. Young people also benefit from being with a therapy dog. The dog is a welcome friend for young people and they all enjoy the dog's company very much.

The safety of children

Risk assessments for young people are sufficiently detailed. They clearly indicate the concerns for the individual young people and what steps staff should take to keep them safe. Risk assessments are subject to regular updates following incidents or concerns. This helps in re-evaluating risks and care strategies and in deciding if any lessons can be learned following an incident.

Behaviour support plans are individualised to each young person and seamlessly follow on from risk assessments. These plans are clear. They help staff to identify what behaviours exhibited by young people to be alert to and what works well in

de-escalating worrying situations. Behaviour support plans could be further strengthened, to provide clarity on when staff need to physically intervene to prevent harm to young people or setting out alternative methods of behaviour management in line with relevant plans.

Since the last inspection, young people have been subject to a high number of physical interventions. These interventions have overwhelmingly been used to prevent young people inflicting self-harm. The manager has diligently reviewed all incidents and tried to identify patterns of behaviour that may provide staff with greater insight into the young people and what led to such incidents. This helps the manager and staff to develop strategies to manage behaviour and prevent incidents escalating.

The manager and staff understand young people's vulnerabilities and they exercise a great deal of vigilance, which helps to keep young people safe. Since the last inspection, there has been a marked decrease in missing-from-care episodes and incidents requiring notification to Ofsted.

Staff know when to report concerns over the conduct of colleagues, and subsequently the manager takes quick and decisive action. This is because the staff and the manager place the welfare and safety of young people first.

Leaders and managers

This home is led by a qualified manager who is committed and passionate about the care provided to young people. She is well respected by staff and young people alike because they know they can confide in her, in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously.

The manager has ensured strict adherence to government guidance during the COVID-19 crisis. Visitors and staff receive the requisite checks to ensure that they are safe to enter the building. Staff have been creative in using the internet for meetings to reduce visitor numbers. Following the onset of the pandemic, the manager and responsible individual requested, and were granted, a variation in the numbers of children they can accommodate from four young people to five.

The manager responded to the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. She has met these, except for the requirement in relation to improving young people's education. This requires further work.

The manager takes quality assurance seriously. She completes her own quality of care reviews, as well as using the reports produced by the independent visitor, to make ongoing improvements to the care provided. This benefits young people and staff.

Staff feel positive about their work and there is good morale amongst the team. Staff receive individual supervision from the manager or a senior member of staff.

This ensures that they have the oversight and guidance they need to provide effective care for young people.

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 young people have suitable education provision identified and are supported to access this educational provision.	22 January 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that in a restraint situation, staff use their professional judgement, supported by their knowledge of each child's risk assessment, an understanding of the needs of the child (as set out in their relevant plans) and an understanding of the risks the child faces. Professional judgements may need to be taken quickly, and staff training, and supervision of practice should support this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC047978

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

Phillip Morris, Social Care Inspector

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