

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC414516
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	Douglas John Harrison
Date of last inspection	12/02/2014

Inspection date	26/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people living at this home experience good standards of care delivered by a well-trained, dedicated and skilled management and staff team. Strong links with social, health and criminal justice professionals provide cohesive and responsive care that meets the individual needs of young people.

Young people benefit from care that addresses their educational, social and personal needs. All young people have very positive views about their care, the staff and the home.

Safeguarding practices are robust and effective. Where young people engage in risk-taking behaviours, staff work with a range of professionals to manage and minimise risks. Consequently, risk taking, offending and harmful behaviours decrease.

Managers have good insight into the strengths of the home and areas for development. They use development plans, internal and external monitoring and feedback to inform planning and affect positive change.

Four requirements are made because of this inspection. These relate to the fire risk assessment, children's guide, internal monitoring reports and maintenance of floor covering. In addition, further recommendations have been made in relation to

records of allegations and bullying behaviours.

These factors do not have an adverse direct impact on the care of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company and provides care for up to three young people. The home is registered to provide care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
21/08/2013	Full	outstanding
29/01/2013	Interim	good progress
17/10/2012	Full	good

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
4 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall produce a guide to the children's homes (in these regulations referred to as the 'children's guide' which shall include a summary of the home's statement of purpose (Regulation 4 (a))	31/12/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained. Specifically in relation to the living room carpet (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	31/12/2014
32 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall after consultation with the fire and rescue authority take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the	31/12/2014

	provision of a fire risk assessment (Regulation 32 (1) (a))	
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1), specifically ensuring monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (1) (a))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff in the home are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying, to act proactively and intervene positively. Specifically in relation to engaging with those, who bully as well as those who are bullied (NMS 3.12)
- ensure that a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of staff, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. (NMS 20.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

From their starting points, young people learn to develop meaningful relationships with staff and each other in this home. Through work with staff, they develop an improved understanding of themselves, their backgrounds and the underlying reasons for their behaviours. This improves emotional resilience and enables young people to develop increased levels of self-esteem.

Young people's health improves because of effective health promotion practices. Life style behaviours of some young people have included substance misuse, smoking and sexual activity. In such circumstances, staff work with young people to enable them to access a range of health care resources, including therapeutic services, drug and alcohol groups and sexual health professionals. Consequently, risk-taking behaviours decrease and young people learn about healthy lifestyles.

Outcomes for young people improve because of a reduction in risk-taking and offending behaviours. One young person said 'I have had my minor blips whilst I have been here, but I am learning from it. This is because staff keep me on the straight and narrow. I am making progress!' A criminal justice worker said of a young person 'There has been a positive change in his behaviours - he does not cause as many big issues now.' As a result of reductions in unsafe behaviours, young people benefit from increased levels of safety, engagement in education and activities. This means, over time, life chances improve and this benefits transition to independence and adulthood.

Young people benefit from the promotion of family contact, in line with local authority care plans. One parent said 'The home is really welcoming, I never feel like I am imposing. It is a brilliant place. I was there last week and then again last night. Staff are excellent and communicate very well with me.' Young people confirm that partnership between the home and families is important and promotes their continuing family relationships and improvements in their behaviour.

Young people make good progress in developing independence skills, which are appropriate to their age and understanding. As young people develop, they gain a greater level of responsibility and support with tasks that are more complex. Over a period of time, young people learn to develop the skills necessary for successful independent living.

Quality of care **good**

Staff are experienced, skilled and committed in their work. They demonstrate consistent concern for the welfare and progress of young people. Good quality care is promoted through caring and mutually respectful relationships between young people and staff. One young person said 'The staff are all great. If I am worried, I can talk with all of them. They are nice, calming, fun to be with and easy to talk to.' These positive relationships enable young people to feel valued and safe.

Young people regularly attend a range of educational provision, supported by the dedicated staff team. Educational provision is individualised according to the needs of the young person. Educational packages include attendance at the provider's own school, one-to-one home tuition, vocational training and college courses. From their starting points, over time, young people improve on school attendance and make positive progress.

Engagement in social activities forms an important part of the home's routine. Young people benefit from engaging in a range of social activities, with bespoke activity timetables providing additional structure to their day. Young people gain enjoyment from participating in these activities. This further promotes their confidence, self-esteem and inclusion in the local community.

Health care needs are well addressed because staff ensure young people attend routine dental, optical and medical health appointments. In the case of accidents and injuries, young people receive prompt emergency care with ongoing support for their recovery. The designated nurse for looked after children said 'Staff communicate very well with me and my team. They advise us of young people's health care issues, request visits and seek advice. The staff use the information provided. The management and staff team are responsive and proactive in making sure young people are healthy.'

All young people confirm that they know how to make a complaint and are confident about being able to do so. The young person's guide is comprehensive and contains information on how to make a complaint. Whilst the guide does not fully reflect the information required under regulation, young people are nevertheless clear about the objectives of the home and the services provided by it.

The home is well decorated and furnished. It provides the space both for privacy and communal activity. The home is in a rural location that offers space for outdoor activities. It provides a comfortable and homely environment in which young people can thrive.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people report feeling safe in this home. Professionals and parents report that young people are safe and feel safe. Young people receive personalised care, which reflects their complex needs in relation to safeguarding.

Young people report that they do not feel bullying is a feature of the home and feel confident staff would immediately address bullying behaviours. Where young people have displayed intimidating or confrontational behaviours, staff supervision and monitoring ensures intervention at an early stage. Staff use keyworker sessions to good effect to talk with young people about whether they feel bullied. However, staff do not always engage with young people who display potential bullying behaviours to address them. This means that keyworker sessions do not ensure all young people talk openly about group dynamics and relationships.

Effective and cooperative links with the local police enable staff to collaborate and share potential concerns about the safety or welfare of young people in a timely manner. A local police officer commented, 'We have weekly visits and like to get in early to get to know the young people. We have a close relationship with the home and get on extremely well with the manager and staff.' He goes on to describe the positive outcomes he has seen in working with the home 'They are in the business of helping young people turn their lives around - I have seen them do it, I have seen some really positive changes.' These positive working relationships ensure young people are safe in the local area and risks are effectively managed.

Missing from care arrangements are effective and robust. Staff work in accordance with the Local Authority joint protocol regarding young people missing from home. They are proactive in locating young people when missing from care and actively seek and maintain contact with young people. Where young people demonstrate concerning patterns of being absent, the staff work with social care professionals to develop strategies to safeguard young people. As a result, incidents of missing from home reduce over time. The police report that the home is effective in dealing with and minimising the risk of young people going missing, a police officer said 'I am amazed we don't have more incidents.' Case recording in this area is clear and demonstrates strong multi-agency working.

Some young people demonstrate challenging and complex behaviours. In such circumstances great attention is paid to staffing levels, staff skills, experience and compatibility of staff with young people. Low levels of physical intervention and sanctions reflect effective behaviour management methods. A Youth Offending Service worker said of behaviour management strategies 'Staff are skilled in recognising what strategies work for individual young people. For some young people it is more about persuasion and encouragement rather than 'putting your foot down.' Consequently, through individualised behaviour management strategies and consistency, young people learn to regulate their behaviours and develop improved understanding of behaviour management.

Young people are safeguarded through rigorous attention to health and safety within

the home. Health and safety checks are undertaken on a regular basis and environmental risks assessments are in place. Fire evacuations are conducted with staff and young people at frequencies that ensure safe evacuation from the home in the event of a fire. Maintenance of fire equipment is a priority and all staff have fire safety training. However, the homes fire risk assessment is in need of review.

Leadership and management

good

The home has an established and experienced Registered Manager. He has been in post since July 2010 and has a National Vocational Qualification at Level 4 in health and care with children and young people and Level 4 in leadership and management. These are suitable qualifications for the post of Registered Manager. He is an experienced and knowledgeable professional who has significant direct experience in working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and challenging behaviours.

The requirement raised at the last inspection has been fully addressed, with staff working hard to ensure that areas of maintenance identified in the last inspection have been addressed. However, despite staff efforts, floor covering in some communal areas are impractical to the needs of the home and remain poorly presented and in need of replacement. For this reason, this requirement is raised again.

Young people benefit from a home that has maintained good standards since the last inspection. The management team demonstrate a commitment for continual improvement. The Registered Manager is proactive in ensuring he keeps up to date with changes in children's home reform and associated legislation, which he shares with the staff team.

Complaints receive prompt consideration and investigation by the manager. Allegations are taken seriously with timely referral to the local authority designated officer and placing authority. This collaboration ensures that clear and agreed plans provide a consistent focus on protecting young people from harm. Whilst investigations into allegations follow procedure, full records of completed investigations and outcomes are not routinely retained in a designated file. This means that systems for monitoring the progress and quality of investigations are unclear.

The manager has clear development plans in place to promote improvement within the home environment. Development plans illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of the home and outline clear plans, with set timescales to implement improvements.

Staff training and development is a management priority. This enables the staff team to meet the complex and diverse needs of young people. A comprehensive training programme ensures young people receive care from a knowledgeable staff team.

Training is regularly refreshed and all staff are up to date both in mandatory training and additional training specific to the needs of young people. Staff are well supported, through regular supervision, appraisal and team meetings. Consequently, young people benefit from a well-trained and appropriately supervised staff team.

The effective operation of the home benefits from rigorous monitoring arrangements. Detailed quality assurance systems are undertaken on a routine basis, both internally and by an external independent visitor. These monitoring reports are submitted to Ofsted as required under regulation. However, internal reports do not reflect the content as required under regulation. This limits the regulator's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the home.

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.