

2519260

Esland North Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for three children. According to the statement of purpose, this home is for children who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. A second manager was registered with Ofsted in June 2020 while the substantive manager is on leave.

Inspection date: 15 July 2020

This monitoring visit

During the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis, Ofsted is not carrying out routine inspections of social care provisions. When Ofsted has judged a service to be high risk, we need to determine what activity is needed to mitigate the risk.

Due to off-site inspection activity raising concerns, an urgent on-site inspection was carried out to focus specifically on the management of difficulties, behaviours and police involvement in the home. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no grading was given.

The progress and experiences of children who live in this home are mixed. Two children have lived here long term and are reported to be achieving well. A third child moved into the home in May 2020. Since then, several serious incidents have happened in the home, culminating in this child being arrested and criminal charges brought against him by staff members.

Not all staff understand this child's complex needs fully and the ways in which these needs often present in his behaviour. Important assessments completed by professionals are not used to inform this child's care plans. Consequently, strategies identified in the assessments intended to support the child are not used by staff. For example, staff said that there is not always a trigger for difficult behaviours.

However, at times, some staff's responses to the child before and during incidents show a lack of care and an ability to communicate and de-escalate effectively.

Consequently, a worrying culture is developing in this home, in which staff rely on the police to manage difficult behaviours rather than finding effective nurturing strategies to help children when they are in need. For example, on two separate occasions, staff and the registered manager allowed a child to be detained overnight in police custody because they said that they were unable to provide an appropriate adult. This is an unreasonable and excessive response that requires urgent attention by senior leaders to ensure that it does not happen again.

Managers and staff have not established a helpful and appropriate relationship with the local police that leads to reducing unnecessary police involvement in the children's lives. They have failed to ensure that the police are helped to understand the children's needs and to work within the home's ethos and approach to care.

The manager and staff are missing opportunities to apply learning from incidents. Reviews of incidents lack rigour and critical analysis to identify what happened, what the triggers were and what could be done differently. The registered manager demonstrated during the inspection that he has the ability to undertake this work but has not done it effectively enough so far. Consequently, poor practice has gone unchallenged, and repetitive incidents occur.

A senior leader present during the inspection provided assurances to inspectors that immediate action would be taken to address the poor performance and worrying culture that has formed in this home. An urgent action plan demonstrating how this will be achieved is required.

A recommendation requiring the installation of an appropriate lock in a bathroom was raised at the inspection in October 2019. Nine months later, the same inappropriate lock remains in use in another bathroom. Swift action is required to address this issue throughout the home. The remaining requirement relating to the management of medication raised at the last inspection will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2019	Full	Good

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
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d))</p> <p>In particular, the provider must ensure that positive and helpful relationships are established with the police to ensure that any police involvement in the home is appropriate and meets the needs of children.</p>	05/08/2020
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand and apply the children's home's overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care and that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p>	05/08/2020

<p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi))</p> <p>In addition, ensure that the recommendations from previous assessments such as speech and language and occupational therapy, are read, understood and applied by staff in relation to a child's care needs.</p>	
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>The positive relationship standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(ix)(x))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff respond appropriately to difficult behaviours seeking to de-escalate situations effectively. In addition, ensure that staff have the skills to manage difficult behaviours to minimise the risk of children becoming criminalised.</p>	<p>05/08/2020</p>

<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work together as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(f))</p>	<p>05/08/2020</p>
<p>19: Behaviour management and discipline</p> <p>No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1))</p> <p>In particular, provide sufficient and appropriate staffing provision to ensure that children are not detained by the police unnecessarily.</p>	<p>05/08/2020</p>
<p>23: Medicines</p> <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that suitable equipment is provided to prevent staff touching medication and posing a risk of contamination.</p>	<p>30/11/2019</p>

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). In particular, ensure that all known risks are included in written documents and ensure that all bathrooms are fitted with a lock that will permit staff entry in an emergency.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2519260

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Registered provider address: Esland Ltd, Suites 1 & 5, Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: James Barlow

Registered manager: Megan Smith and Dean Wood

Inspectors

Paula Lahey, social care regulatory inspection manager
Carys Flain, social care inspector

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