

1253008

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2021.

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 31 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 18 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2020	Full	Good
31/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
07/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children's overall experience of living in the home is variable. Not all children have a sense of permanence despite being in the home for over a year. Staff do not know what children's care plans say or what diagnosis children have. This lack of understanding means that staff do not have all the information needed to provide consistency of care to children.

Children have trusted and secure relationships with some staff. However, there has been a period of instability which has seen many changes related to the staff team. This means that children are often looked after by unfamiliar staff. One child told the inspector that this makes them feel anxious. The consistent use of agency staff or staff from other homes means that children are not always supported by a trusted adult.

The home is welcoming and is decorated to a good standard. Children's bedrooms are decorated to reflect their likes and their interests. However, there are no photographs of the children or any other evidence of their presence anywhere in the home. This does not promote the children's identity and sense of belonging.

Staff provide children with opportunities to express their views on a regular basis, and staff respond to them, where appropriate. 'Chat and chill' meetings now take place instead of children's meetings, at the children's request. These meetings are less formal and appeal to the children. Children learn that their views matter, which improves their sense of self-worth.

Where children have not attended school in the past, they are now engaging with education, and there are clear education plans in place. The manager engages with relevant professionals, including the virtual school, and attends education meetings and advocates on the children's behalf. This supports children with their education progression.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met. Children receive support from a range of professionals, including specialist services. One professional described how staff are always willing to take part in conversations about the children and to take on board any suggestions given. The professional said, 'The care and commitment given to [Name] is excellent.'

Children know how to make a complaint, and the forms are readily accessible in the home. This means that if children want to make a complaint confidentially, they can. Children have used the procedure effectively to raise their concerns, and the manager has responded appropriately. This gives children confidence that their concerns are being heard and that they are valued.

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

Decisions to admit new children to the home are made before impact risk assessments are completed. The manager seeks information from relevant professionals; however, there is no analysis on the impact of this placement on either the children living in the home or on the child being admitted. The lack of a robust matching process means that children may be placed inappropriately; thus, placing all children at risk.

Children's risk assessments are well written and child focused. At the last inspection, a requirement was made as risk assessments did not always contain the current risks for children. A review of documents shows that this shortfall has continued. This failure means that staff do not have the up-to-date information about children and how to manage the risks effectively. This can leave children at risk of harm.

Children's care plans are detailed and are easy to understand. They are written from the child's perspective and include helpful visual aids throughout. One child's care plan, however, is not complete and has missing information. This means that staff do not have the correct information to be able to provide consistent care.

The recording of physical intervention is not completed in line with the relevant regulations. Staff who undertook the intervention complete their own debrief and that of colleagues as well as with the child. On one occasion, the manager requested a 'lessons learned' exercise following a physical intervention. The review undertaken is thorough and an action plan is in place with regards to staff learning and training. However, the lack of consistent management oversight means that it cannot be established whether the holds are safe, necessary and proportionate. This means that children may be at risk of harm.

Staff on occasion lock all internal doors downstairs. The locking of doors is not undertaken in line with the relevant regulations. This denies children access to these areas of the home and creates an institutionalised environment for children.

There is an inconsistent approach to recording information in all documents. There is a lack of attention to detail in some records while others contain blaming and unhelpful language. Daily handover logs lack the detail that is necessary to inform other staff members of any specific issues. The lack of consistency means it is confusing for both children and staff to understand what is expected of them, which potentially places children at risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home has a relatively new and inexperienced manager in post. She has a clear vision of how the service needs to develop and to improve. She has a strong presence in the home and ensures that she spends time with the children. The manager role models good practice and is child focused.

The manager has failed to ensure that there are effective and consistent internal auditing processes in place to monitor the performance of staff and how the home functions. A new communications tool has recently been implemented to improve information sharing. The lack of consistent management oversight, however, means that the manager is unable to identify shortfalls in the quality of care provided and to understand the impact that this has on children's progress.

The manager completes an assessment of the location of the home and considers potential risks and the measures required to help protect children. However, this does not include all known risks within the community. As such, there is no clear plan in place to manage these risks. This has not had an adverse effect on any children, but this means that potential risks may go unassessed.

A previous requirement to ensure that all staff have the skills and the qualifications to meet each child's needs has not been actioned. Not all staff have completed mandatory training, including first aid. This means that not all staff are able to respond appropriately to the specific needs of each child.

Staff meet monthly with the company's clinical team to talk about the children's progress. This enables staff to improve their knowledge of the impact of children's backgrounds and experiences on children. However, not all staff receive regular supervision from the management team. This does not ensure that any practice issues are addressed and that staff have consistent opportunities to reflect on their practice and their care of the children.

A wealth of positive feedback has been received from parents, social workers and other professionals as part of this inspection. One parent said that they cannot believe the difference in their child since the child moved to the home. They said, '[Name] is appreciated and valued for who they are. [Name] has unconditional support and is responding to that.'

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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(b))</p>	27 August 2021
<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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p>	27 August 2021

<p>This specifically relates to all staff, including agency staff, completing all mandatory training.</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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(h))</p>	<p>27 August 2021</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(ii)(c))</p>	<p>27 August 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p>	<p>27 August 2021</p>

<p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.</p> <p>(Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b))</p>	27 August 2021
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p>	27 August 2021

<p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>(Regulation 46 (1))</p>	<p>27 August 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision so that they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered manager should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party

information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1253008

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Registered provider address: Esland Ltd, Suite 1, Riverside Business Centre,
Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: Kerry Morley

Registered manager: Kerry Swales

Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

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