

# 1214270

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for one young person who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately run and managed. This is a solo provision situated in a semi-rural location.

Since the last inspection, a new manager took up the post and was registered in July 2020.

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.

### Inspection dates: 17 to 18 August 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 28 October 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
24/01/2019	Full	Good
15/11/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

One young person, who had been living at the home for a few years, successfully transitioned to another provision closer to his home. The organisation challenged the decision at the time on behalf of the child as he did not wish to leave. There was evidence of good challenge to the placing authority. However, a best interest decision was made by the local authority, and the child was moved. This child made significant and positive progress throughout his placement and was able to settle into his new home.

A management decision was made to accommodate a child for a shorter period. There was a known history of going missing from care and concerns around criminal exploitation. There were also concerns relating to county-lines and criminal gang activity.

Although day-to-day care was offered, the home failed to engage the child in meaningful and sustained daily routines and education. The home was able to introduce the child into a local football team; however, alternative activities to positively engage the child for prolonged periods were minimal. The child continued to repeatedly go missing from the home and was at risk of criminal activity and exploitation.

Insufficient and inadequate staffing arrangements negatively affected the ability of the child to build trusting and meaningful relationships with staff. The child spoke to the inspector and said, 'I don't like it when they bring random people [staff] in my house. I'm not going to sit in with a stranger.' Children with attachment issues struggle to build trusting relationships with adults, and the unstable staffing arrangements reinforced those feelings for the child to disengage with the home and go missing from home.

A timetable had been devised to encourage the child to participate in education. However, this was ineffective as the staff could not engage the child in any learning. As a result, the child was not receiving education.

Staff supported the child to continue to have contact with family members who lived a significant distance away. Generally, this was positive contact and helped with transition planning for the child's return. However, the child went missing during a family contact.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

The home was unable to demonstrate that the quality of care met the needs of the child or promoted his safety and welfare. Several shortfalls were identified in respect of the management of missing-from-home episodes and of the help and protection standard.

The child had a detailed individual behaviour support plan that clearly identified the risks; however, this proved to be ineffectual. The registered manager attended frequent strategy meetings and risk management meetings. Minutes from important meetings were missing from the child's records; therefore, staff did not always have access to, or

follow, missing-from-care protocols for the child. Staff were unable to fully understand the risks, and the impact on the child was that he would still go missing from home on a regular basis.

Feedback from other professionals involved in the child's care indicated that although staff attempted to provide a good level of care, they did not always follow the agreed action plan. One example is that staff were unaware that the child was missing from the premises until several hours later. Strategies to manage missing-from-care incidents did not help to reduce the number of missing episodes.

The registered manager frequently attended multi-agency professional meetings and received positive feedback. However, the effectiveness and the impact of strategies were not regularly reviewed or updated after each incident. The child was still able to leave the home, go missing and engage in unsafe behaviour.

Decisions around acceptable smartphone use were not challenged by the registered manager. Consequently, there was no monitoring or tracking of who the child was in contact with and understanding of the associated risks. The child was often allowed on his mobile phone until the early hours of the morning which results in a disruption of day-to-day routines.

The location of the home is nearby to a main train station. Easy access to train stations was overlooked, despite the significant history of missing-from-care episodes, when the child was placed. When the child went missing from home, staff would go to the local train station to help return the child to placement. However, this was not effective. The child told the inspector, 'They look for me at the train station, but I just get lifts from my mates. The other day, my mate came down from Manchester and just picked me up.' Thoughtful matching and care planning was lacking to ensure that the child's needs could be met in this home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The registered manager is inexperienced in managing the significant risks associated with criminal exploitation and missing-from-care incidents. The manager fails to demonstrate that he inspires a culture that helps children to fulfil their potential. The manager's lack of skills and knowledge leads to an overall lack of confidence in his ability to manage the risks in the home effectively. Leaders and managers lack oversight to ensure that the registered manager is confident in his role to manage the home.

The registered manager did not keep the regulator updated after significant incidents had occurred. Communication with the child's family proved problematic, and the manager lacked creativity in how to engage anxious and worried family members. Communication and written reports lacked important detail in notifications to the regulator and to the local authority's designated officer.

Several significant and outstanding documents are not placed on the child's records in a timely manner. Documents are not updated and/or checked for accuracy and lack management oversight. Updated minutes are not supplied to the placing authority after

important meetings. Updated records are particularly important to ensure that a robust management plan is in place to manage risks around criminal activity and missing-from-care incidents, and that staff are fully aware of the risks. The home's records are disorganised, and the manager struggled to provide evidence at inspection.

The staff team has been unstable and does not provide continuity of care. This negatively affected the stability of the home and the child increasingly goes missing. Staff do not always follow the missing-from-care action plan. Supervision records indicate that staff lack confidence to manage the risks in the home.

Two staff members failed to safeguard the child who was able to leave the home and board a train before staff were even aware that he was missing from the home. An internal investigation by the company led to appropriate action to keep children safe. Another member of staff was subject to an allegation by the child. This was reported to the designated officer; however, the designated officer felt there was insufficient detail to make able to make a decision about how it should be investigated. As a result, the matter is still outstanding, and the provider has returned the member of staff to work.

The registered manager does not utilise and/or action recommendations from external review and monitoring systems effectively to ensure that there is best practice in the home.

## 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, the 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 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 staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p>	8 October 2021

<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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</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>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(c)(e))</p>	<p>8 October 2021</p>
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p>	<p>8 October 2021</p>

<p>use this understanding to deliver care 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—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare.</p> <p>The conditions are—</p> <p>that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority;</p> <p>that the care meets the child's needs;</p> <p>that the care is delivered by a person who—</p> <p>has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and</p> <p>is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii) (3)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii))</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p>	<p>8 October 2021</p>



help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;

promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;

maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;

raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;

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;

help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and

that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.  
(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendation

- The provider must 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 not use language that may be considered judgemental or confrontational. ('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:** 1214270

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Esland North Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Mark Ullah

**Registered manager:** Daniel Bresnahan

## Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, Social Care Inspector

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