

2635062

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three children. The home cares for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

This is the home's first inspection following its registration in May 2021. The registered manager has been in post since the home was registered and is suitably qualified.

This inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns or allegations received by Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 October 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 and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: Not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not previously inspected		

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children do not feel valued or listened to. They have raised concerns about the conduct of managers. Children consider that the conduct of managers has been aggressive and hostile. However, leaders have not addressed these concerns effectively. When children have raised other less significant concerns, these have been investigated. However, managers have not reviewed the outcomes with children to ensure that they are satisfied.

Staff and managers do not have the skills to meet the needs of children. The management style is authoritative and controlling. Interactions with children have not taken account of the emotional impact of self-injurious behaviours and early childhood trauma on children. As a result, children have experienced insensitive and inappropriate care.

The home has had a high level of staff turnover, with six of the seven staff members currently in probation. The high turnover of staff means that children have not been able to build supportive, trusting relationships with staff members. Because so many staff have left the home, children are hesitant to build relationships with new staff.

Managers have not worked effectively with partners to make sure that children's educational needs are met. Not all children have a clear plan for their education. One child has remained out of education after completing her GCSE exams, without a plan in place to return to any form of education.

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

Children do not trust the managers of the home to respond appropriately to their concerns. Children are fearful of the potential response from managers if they complain about the home. Children have not had access to advocates and have not been given the confidence to access support from independent adults. This significantly weakens the effectiveness of the home's safeguarding processes.

Staff have not been able to provide reassurance to children because they are equally mistrustful of managers. Staff also fear repercussions from managers if they raise concerns about the care provided to children. Staff did not feel confident to follow whistle-blowing procedures when they were concerned about the conduct of managers and concerned about the children. Children have been at risk of harm because whistle-blowing procedures were ineffective.

Risk assessments do not provide staff with clear guidance to follow in the event of a serious incidents. Care practice is not reviewed effectively after serious incidents. When risk management plans are amended, this information is not always shared with staff. For example, some staff were not made aware of the fact that they

needed to increase the frequency of checks on a child, following one incident. This left the child at risk of harm.

Behaviour management strategies are inappropriate to the needs of children living at the home. The manager and deputy have interacted with children in a way that has made them feel intimidated and belittled. Staff report that house rules are changed without explanation and that new rules are imposed arbitrarily on children. Children say that this has resulted in them feeling anxious and unsettled.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Managers have imposed unnecessarily restrictive routines on children. They have not taken sufficient account of children's needs and previous experiences. For example, the routines of the home, particularly at night-time, have been enforced in a way that has prevented children from comforting each other when they are in distress. This has left children feeling isolated and increased their level of distress.

Managers have failed to treat children with dignity, respect and nurture. Some actions of managers appear deliberately provocative. For example, a child was brought a black bed when they specifically requested a white bed. This had a considerable impact on the child who associated a black bed with previous negative experiences.

Management monitoring systems are poor. The manager has not identified shortfalls in practice and has not thoroughly evaluated incident records and risk management strategies. For example, managers have approved risk management plans when they have not included all the required information. In addition, children's records make reference to the wrong child and information had been copied and pasted from other children's assessments.

Managers have not been able to recruit and develop a staff team with the experience or needed to care for children's complex mental and emotional health needs. Staff have not completed behaviour management training or training in the home's therapeutic approach. This limits their ability to provide safe, nurturing care to children.

In response to the inspector's findings during this inspection, the home's senior managers and directors acted decisively to address the identified concerns. Actions have been taken to promote the safety and well-being of children. A new management team has immediately started work at the home. The new managers have a proven track record of delivering good-quality care.

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 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;</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>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that children receive personalised care that meets their needs as set out in plans.</p>	<p>28 November 2021</p>

The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—

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develop positive relationships with them;

engage with them; and

take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

ensure that staff—

ascertain and consider each child’s views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child’s best interests when making decisions about the child’s care and welfare;

help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;

help each child to understand how the child’s views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child;

regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home’s care;

help each child to understand how the child’s privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited;

ensure that each child—

is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives;

is given appropriate advocacy support;

ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child.

(Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)

(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(b)(i)(iii)(d)(iii)(e))

<p>This specifically relates to ensuring the wishes, views and feelings of children are listened to and acted upon.</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>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring appropriate action is taken to identify educational arrangements for children.</p>	<p>28 November 2021</p>
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>develop the child’s interests and hobbies;</p>	<p>28 November 2021</p>

<p>participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child’s interests and preferences; and</p> <p>make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and</p> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child’s interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>This specifically related to ensuring children’s health and emotional needs are understood and addressed.</p>	<p>28 November 2021</p>
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>strive to gain each child’s respect and trust;</p> <p>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;</p>	<p>28 November 2021</p>

<p>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;</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring managers have an understanding of children’s emotional needs and the impact of trauma on their day-to-day lives.</p>	
<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>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>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(b))</p> <p>This is specifically in relation to ensuring leaders take action to protect children’s welfare. It also relates to ensuring children’s risk assessments reflect their needs and identified risk, providing guidance on how staff should respond to risks.</p>	<p>28 November 2021</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>28 November 2021</p>

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and
promotes their welfare.

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 as a team where appropriate;

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))

This specifically relates to managers embedding monitoring systems in the home to improve the quality of care. It also relates to the manager ensuring staff have received all required training.

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2635062

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: James Barlow

Registered manager: Sioux Heithus

Inspector

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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