

# 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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home does not have a registered manager in post. However, appropriate interim arrangements are in place.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

### Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** requires improvement to be good

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

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:** 12 October 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 12/10/2021      | Full            | Inadequate           |

## Inspection judgements

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

Although improvements have been made following the previous inspection, some safeguarding arrangements are not yet consistently good. This reduces the overall quality of care provided to children.

Because of improvements made since the last inspection, staff now have positive and nurturing relationships with children. Staff speak fondly of the children. They are quick to recognise and celebrate children's achievements. Children are able to identify staff that they trust and can confide in. One child said, 'Things are a million times better.' Children also now have access to an advocate, providing them with someone independent from the home to talk to.

Children's views and wishes are listened to and acted on. They have been able to make changes to the layout of rooms and add their own soft furnishings. One child said, 'It's more of a homely vibe, this is our place now.'

Children take part in a variety of activities. As a result, they keep fit, improve their social skills and develop new interests. Children are also given support to learn independent living skills. Staff keep a record of each child's activities in a daily diary. However, they do not always highlight children's achievements, progress or positive relationships. As a result, the diaries may not be helpful to children.

Children's progress in education is varied. However, all children are provided with strong support and encouragement from staff. An older child who is not currently in education, employment or training is supported to complete online learning and develop their independence skills. Another child has grown in confidence and self-belief, enabling them to take GCSE exams this year. This is a significant achievement.

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

On one occasion, staff did not recognise a potential risk to children. However, a member of the home's management team did subsequently identify the concern and shared information with the appropriate safeguarding agency. When the home did not receive a suitable response, the manager did not take action to follow this up. These safeguarding shortfalls had the potential to place children at risk of harm.

Risk assessments and support plans are now reviewed at regular intervals and provide staff with the required guidance to manage risks effectively. Risk management strategies are now agreed in consultation with the home's clinical team so that they fully reflect the needs of each child. As children develop increasingly

trusting relationships with staff, they feel safer and engage in fewer risky behaviours.

Incidents in the home are infrequent because staff have good behaviour management and de-escalation skills. When there are incidents involving challenging behaviour, staff manage these well. Staff and children have opportunities to debrief with management following incidents. This means that lessons can be learned, and behaviour management strategies updated.

Children have regular opportunities to express their views. Staff listen to these views and act on them. Children know how to make a complaint and can identify a trusted adult that they would speak to if they had any concerns. Improvement in the way children are responded to is demonstrated by a recent complaint. This complaint has been thoroughly investigated and children have been provided with a clear response.

To address shortfalls identified at the last inspection, staff have recently completed updated training in relation to safeguarding, whistleblowing and closed cultures. This has improved their knowledge of safeguarding practice and how to report concerns. Staff now feel confident about reporting matters of concern.

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

A new interim management team has brought about improvement since the last inspection. A compliance notice and six requirements made at the previous visit have been addressed. Children enjoy a better quality of care as a result.

Managers have a good understanding of the areas of practice that still require improvement. Improved monitoring and performance management systems are now in place, but not yet fully effective. Some home records are not well organised. Because different members of the management team hold information that others are not aware of, the acting manager has not had a consistently good oversight of important documents.

Morale is now better. However, staff report feeling tired. Ongoing staff shortages mean that core staff often choose to undertake additional shifts to provide children with as much consistency as possible. Although staff are well intentioned, working long hours has the potential to have an impact on their care practice. Children say that inconsistent care arrangements have been challenging for them and made it difficult to build stable, trusting relationships with staff.

Managers have not ensured that staff have received training to enable them to fully meet the additional needs of some children. Although staff have received basic online training about children's additional needs, they do not feel that this fully equips them to provide high-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.

| <b>Requirement</b>   | <b>Due date</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| <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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi))</p> <p>This is specifically in relation to ensuring that when information is shared by children, staff have the necessary skills to recognise and respond to potential risk.</p> | 5 January 2022  |
| <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>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>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p>  | 5 January 2022  |

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

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

This specifically relates to managers embedding monitoring systems in the home to improve the quality of care. It also relates to the home having sufficient staffing without regular use of staff from other homes and agency staff members. The manager is to ensure that staff receive all relevant training.

## Recommendations

- The registered person 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 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:** 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

## Inspectors

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

Rachael Sprigg, Social Care Inspector

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