

# 1245565

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to care for three children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home offers short-term placements of 12 weeks to children to assess their care needs before they move to longer-term care arrangements.

There is an acting manager who is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 2 and 3 May 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 4 April 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/04/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/06/2018	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children benefit from a spacious and generally well-maintained home. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and take care of their things. Some areas of the home would benefit from additional items such as photos and pictures to create a more homely environment. The garden area is neglected and not yet put to good use. Managers recognise the importance of creating a child-centred space which is accessible for children and where they can have fun.

Children build trusted relationships with staff in a short space of time. This is a credit to staff's ability to establish a rapport with children very quickly. The staff identify ways in which they can make a difference to children's lives through adventure activities. Memory books are created to ensure children have photos and mementos of their achievements.

Children are well supported to see their families. They are taken to see their parents, often at a distance from the home. One child has increased the time he spends with his mother, which he is pleased about. He has also been supported with a recent bereavement in a very sensitive and empathetic way. As a result, children continue to feel part of their families and maintain their sense of identity.

Managers prioritise education and learning. The staff work creatively with children to help them undertake a recognised education programme. This provides good learning opportunities, focusing on areas which are relevant to children's needs. Children take part in direct work about important issues such as sexual health, drug use and understanding their feelings. When children make complaints, they are taken seriously. Managers investigate concerns and provide children with thoughtful responses.

Children are in good health. They have a good diet and opportunities to cook with staff. Children are supported to attend health appointments. Considering that placements are temporary, this is well managed, for example registering with universal services in a timely way. Children have good education around alcohol and drugs which, in some cases, has enabled them to reduce or stop using harmful substances.

Leaders and managers give careful consideration to children moving in and out of the home. Considerable time is spent gaining a full understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities of the children moving in and the impact on children already living at the home. Managers are flexible when placements need to be extended for important reasons. These approaches are intended to maximise stability and safety for children and avoid unnecessary disruption to their lives.

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

The managers and staff understand well the risks posed to and from children. There are clear risk management plans which are reviewed regularly. They provide clear guidance for staff about how to protect children. The managers and staff have helped children to reduce risks over time. One child said that he no longer goes missing or uses drugs.

The managers and staff provide a well-coordinated response when children are missing from home. They work well with key agencies to ensure children are returned safely. Staff are proactive in looking for children and keep in touch with them when possible. As a result, children's incidents of going missing gradually reduce. This keeps them safer from exploitation and criminal activity.

Staff support children to reduce risks when using the internet. Strategies agreed with relevant agencies are in place to protect children where necessary. Where risks are escalating, staff work with agencies such as police and social care. As part of their education, children learn how to keep themselves safe.

Staff use their skills, knowledge and relationships with children to manage incidents well. Overall, they are able to de-escalate situations, which keeps children safe from coming to significant harm. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort. Children are spoken to following an incident to help them understand why an intervention was used. Recording of incidents has improved over recent months and, overall, there is evidence of management oversight. Managers now understand the importance of ensuring that their own evaluation is recorded for every individual incident.

Managers understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Concerns raised by or about children are investigated thoroughly and the relevant agencies are informed. Practice is transparent in this area. Staff, including agency workers, are generally recruited safely. There is one example where a reference was not sufficiently helpful and an alternative was not sought.

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

There has been instability in the management of the home for some time. There have been acting managers, however, despite ongoing efforts, there has not been a registered manager for a significant period. Leaders have recently appointed a new manager who is very new in post but knows the home. He is currently being supported by the responsible individual. The manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

The responsible individual has had very good oversight of the home during the period of instability. Her commitment and dedication have enabled the home to function during this time. She has steered the home through a very busy period,

including responding to some concerns regarding practice. These concerns have been dealt with in a timely and robust way. She has worked hard to ensure that children's care has been minimally impacted during this time.

The home has a new manager and a recently appointed deputy and is therefore going through another transition. Work is underway to develop a new culture in the team, which started with a recent awayday. Leaders and managers are committed to re-establishing stability and consistency in the staff team over the coming months.

Staff speak positively about the home and they enjoy working here. They have welcomed the new manager. While there has been some turnover in staff, there has equally been some good retention. Managers are currently recruiting to fill vacancies. While this is ongoing, they are making good use of a small number of agency workers who they trust. This means that children are cared for by suitable adults they know.

Despite the changes in management, staff continue to receive supervision. Staff report that this is helpful in terms of their development and keeps their focus on children. Some senior workers delivering supervision have not yet received training in this area. Managers recognise that this needs to be rectified to ensure that supervision is of a good standard for all staff.

Overall, staff have completed relevant training to meet the needs of children. There are plans to increase the training programme to cover the needs of new staff and also to increase the level of skill around the adventure activities provided by the home. This will bring new opportunities for children to enjoy more outdoor experiences.

## 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 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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))</p> <p>This specifically relates to embedding the new management team to ensure that the home provides consistent care for children and that this has continual and stable oversight.</p>	6 September 2023

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of its children and is a homely, domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene, etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the recruitment process safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that records kept electronically can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view them and, if required, be

reproduced in a legible form. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to 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)

## **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:** 1245565

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

**Registered provider:** Esland North Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Kim Bell

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

Alli Tandy, Social Care Inspector



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