

# 2519260

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for three children who have emotional and social needs. At the time of this inspection, no children were living in the home.

The registered manager resigned in January 2023. A new manager was in post but did not submit an application to register and subsequently left their role. The manager who resigned in January 2023 is now back in post. They have submitted an application to register.

### Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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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:** 17 January 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2023	Full	Good
19/10/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

The progress of children is mixed. In some areas, children make good progress, but this is not consistent. For example, children do not always have consistent boundaries in place to help them make progress. Children have experienced a lack of stability due to the changes of managers and inconsistent staffing. This has impacted on their experiences and progress.

Two children have moved out, as leaders and managers assessed that their needs were no longer best met in this home. Staff supported both children to move on positively. They keep in touch with one child who had lived at the home for nine years.

The quality of the environment varies. In some areas, such as the kitchen and lounge the home is well-presented and homely. However, other parts of the home are damaged and require repairs. The manager has plans for this work to be complete before a new child moves into the home.

Children have good access to education. One child returned to school after not attending for several years. Another child completed their GCSE exams. When children are not in school, they are given educational activities to complete at home. Staff support children to develop skills so they can move on successfully. One child learned to use public transport, staff helped them to write their CV and apply for employment and apprenticeships.

Children are offered healthy food to eat and are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children are encouraged to take part in a range of activities with staff. One child enjoyed going on holiday with staff. One child enjoyed playing rugby in the local area. Another child completed a bike ride with staff to raise money for charity.

Staff regularly talk to children. Children's wishes and views are heard and understood. Discussions with children are meaningful, and these conversations are helpful. One child said, 'I like the team. I would not change anything; it is actually alright. I feel much better about it than when I first came.'

Staff regularly communicate with professionals and family members to support children and advocate for them. Managers challenged the social worker when they were concerned for the safety of a child. They worked well with one local authority to enable a child to remain in the home while an alternative home was sought for them. They supported children to have positive moves to another setting.

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

Staff have worked hard through a difficult period where children were unsettled and there was no registered manager in place. During this time, children's relationships with each other deteriorated. Some serious incidents occurred. The new manager and staff helped children to feel more settled, so they were able to move onto their new homes positively.

There have been some incidents when children have tried to hurt one another or made threats to hurt others. Staff have appropriately intervened to keep children safe. Staff have tried to calm the situation down, but this is not always successful. Staff try to talk to children after each incident has happened.

The recording of significant incidents is not always detailed or clear enough. For some incidents, it is not clear what has happened, and there are gaps in the information. This leaves managers unable to clearly assess the quality of care and ensure children are effectively safeguarded.

Staff have written guidance about how to manage any potential risk and keep children safe. These documents are clear and thorough. They incorporate risks in different areas and are kept up to date. However, staff have not consistently followed these.

Children do not always receive a consistent approach from staff to support them to understand the impact of poor behaviour. Staff do not manage children's behaviour well. The routines and boundaries in place are not consistent. Some consequences are punitive, and they do not enable children to learn from their experiences.

On some occasions, leaders and managers took strong and decisive action in relation to keeping children safe. However, this was not consistent. For example, on one occasion, staff did not take thorough action to search for a child who was missing from home at night. On other occasions, staff did act promptly to look for children when they were missing. They spoke to people in the community and family members to try and locate children.

When safeguarding concerns are identified, they are reported promptly to social workers. This is in line with procedures. Staff talk to children openly about worries for their safety. There is good communication between staff and social workers, who receive regular updates about children. When incidents do occur, there is prompt communication with other agencies to resolve these issues.

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

Leadership and management of the home has been weak since the previous inspection. There has been an unsettled period, due to changes of managers and a lack of experienced leadership. The registered manager left her post in January

2023. A new manager was appointed however did not submit an application to register and resigned. The previous registered manager has returned to the company and is back in the manager post. They submitted an application to register on 9 October 2023.

Monitoring and review systems are not consistent or effective. This impedes leaders ability to identify shortfalls and improve. Managers have now taken action to address these weaknesses and ensure these systems are more effective.

Staff shared with the inspector that morale was low when they did not have an experienced manager in place. On some occasions, staff reported feeling tired and unsupported. They have said that this is now improving with the new manager in place.

Several members of staff have left the home, and new staff members have been recruited. Staff feel reassured about the future of the home and the plans that are in place. They have benefited from intensive training that has been offered in preparation for a new child moving in. There is now a range of skills and experience in the staff team. This will enable staff to work positively with a new child in different ways.

The manager has gathered information and completed robust plans to prepare for a new child moving in. A thorough risk assessment has been completed, and the staff have been offered training and support to help prepare them. The manager has thought carefully about how to welcome this child. She has purchased new bedding, learning books, sensory toys and equipment to help welcome this child.

The manager recognises what works well in the home and what needs to change. The manager understands the areas that require improvement and has communicated this to staff. There are good levels of evaluation and reflection that enable staff to learn from recent events. Research and learning is used in team meetings to improve staff practice. Staff now understand their roles in the home and what needs to change for things to improve.

The manager has already taken effective steps to advocate for children, and when something is not right has challenged professionals appropriately. One professional commented, 'The communication and teamwork around moving one child on has been excellent.'

Feedback from professionals and family members is positive. They describe good communication between them and the manager. One social worker said, 'The new manager really knows what a good home looks like; she takes pride in this. I would highly recommend this home whilst she is the manager. She has already shown great commitment to this 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 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>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure robust plans are in place for when children go missing from the home, and that staff take effective action to look for children when they are absent from the home without consent.</p>	20 November 2023
<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 the children to achieve their full potential;</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>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)(h))</p>	20 November 2023

## **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that staff are supported to understand the importance of therapeutic and nurturing care, including the use of consequences and importance of accessing shared areas within the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

## **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:** 2519260

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

**Registered provider:** Esland North Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Andrew Lewis

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector



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Manchester  
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