

# 2501791

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to three children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and mild to moderate learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager has been in post since December 2023 and has not yet submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

**Date of last inspection:** 14 June 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2022	Full	Good
09/06/2021	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

The children currently living in the home have made some progress. However, shortfalls in the quality of care provided have limited this progress. Children who have lived at the home previously have not been safeguarded effectively or provided with appropriate care.

Since the last inspection, two children have moved on from the home and two children have come to live at the home. Plans for children when they move into the home are well thought out. One child, who has recently moved into the home, has settled in very well. They said, 'It's sound here, nice and quiet, and people listen to me.' This child has already built positive relationships with staff, which has led to progress in how they manage their response to trauma. They have not gone missing from home, and staff have supported their behaviour in a positive way, which has led to a significant decrease in incidents for this child.

One child has been supported to move on from the home in a planned way to a foster carer. The move to their new home was thoughtfully planned, with lots of support, visits and time to get to know the foster family.

However, another child moved on from the home due to an escalation in their needs that the staff were unable to meet. This was also impacting on the well-being of the other children living in the home. During the inspection, another child was in the process of being moved from the home due to an escalation in risks that the staff were unable to manage. This led to immediate notice being served. The child's independent reviewing officer had not been informed or involved in this process, preventing them from being able to support the child with this change.

Children can personalise their rooms. However, one child's bedroom was untidy, overflowing with laundry and had items of broken furniture that had not been repaired or replaced. Although senior leaders took some action during the inspection, this had gone unaddressed previously, and staff had not taken appropriate steps to provide a warm and nurturing environment for this child.

Children's education attendance is mixed. One child has a home tutor while awaiting a school placement, but they have not been effective in providing education to the child. Another child attends an alternative provision. Their attendance is generally good.

There are shortfalls in the quality of care planning records. These do not guide staff effectively about how to support the children. Some plans contain conflicting information. When children do make progress, this is not captured or linked to targets outlined in their local authority plans.

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

Effective action to safeguard children is not always taken following concerns. Staff have failed to follow children's risk plans, allowing them access to electronic devices, which has placed children at risk of harm. Furthermore, records were unavailable to demonstrate whether the registered manager, at the time of some incidents, took effective action to address safeguarding concerns and reduce future risks.

Staff look for children when they go missing from home. However, risk plans to guide staff on actions to take contain conflicting guidance about children's free time in the community and their mobile phone use. This has the potential to cause unnecessary risks, particularly for one child, who is at high risk of being exploited and going missing from home.

The children know how to raise complaints. However, while managers acknowledged these, there is no evidence to show that they have been investigated or that any action has been taken.

Some safer recruitment processes are in place to ensure that staff are suitably vetted. However, due to issues with system access, the records for agency staff could not be provided, and leaders are unable to demonstrate that they have appropriate checks in place for these staff.

At times, staff provide poor responses to children when they communicate their experiences of childhood trauma. Staff have not had guidance or oversight from managers to support them to respond appropriately.

Records made following the use of physical intervention have improved since the last inspection, and restraint is only used as a last resort. However, consequences used in response to children's behaviours are not restorative in nature and lack management oversight to ensure the appropriateness of the measure.

The home has undergone some refurbishment since the last inspection. However, there are still some shortfalls in the environment, such as the inappropriate covering of emergency lighting and broken items strewn across the garden. Action was taken during the inspection to rectify these issues.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the responsible individual, and the registered manager left in December 2023. A new manager and responsible individual have been appointed. At the time of the inspection, the manager was away from work. The responsible individual was present during the inspection.

Responses to safeguarding concerns by previous senior leaders and the manager have been poor. Some allegations made by a child about staff were not reported to the local authority designated officer or Ofsted as the regulator. When some of

these allegations have been explored or investigated, senior leaders are unable to demonstrate that actions have been carried out as recommended.

There are several shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of children's care and staff practice. Systems have not been effective in highlighting areas of improvement needed. Some shortfalls from the last inspection have been repeated or have moved from a recommendation to a requirement due to a failure to take action. Several records were unavailable during the inspection, which did not allow the responsible individual to demonstrate whether effective action had been taken.

Consent from one child's social worker has not been gained for the independent person to review the child's records or for surveillance and monitoring systems to be used. Despite this, door alarms are being used on the child's bedroom, and the independent person has been given access to the child's records. Managers have failed to recognise this oversight.

There is a small and consistent staff team that has been supported by agency staff for a short period of time as an additional safeguarding measure. However, agency staff's details have not been recorded on rosters to demonstrate who has worked on which days. Therefore, it is unknown who has worked in the home.

The registered provider has updated the home's statement of purpose. However, this has not been sent to the regulator as required.

Staff are supported with regular supervision and appraisals, and team meetings are frequently held.

An action plan was provided by senior leaders during the inspection, and immediate action was taken to address the safeguarding concerns identified. The new responsible individual is confident that they can deliver improvements and provide safe care for children and has started to make some early changes to demonstrate this.

## 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>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>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 designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered provider taking action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review and implement children's risk plans.</li> </ul>	31 March 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support children to understand how to stay safe.</li> <li>■ Take effective action in the event of serious incidents and safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>■ Ensure that staff have the skills to appropriately respond to safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>■ Ensure the environment is maintained to an acceptable, safe standard.</li> <li>■ Ensure that effective monitoring systems are in place to oversee the care of children and their safety.</li> </ul>	
<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>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;</p> <p>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)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the two previous inspections and is restated.</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider should address the shortfalls in records made for children, progress in staff</p>	<p>31 March 2024</p>

<p>qualifications and the manager's oversight and monitoring of records and reporting.</p> <p>The registered provider should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Children are offered the care and support as outlined in the home's statement of purpose.</li> <li>■ Senior leaders review the quality of care for children and make developments in the quality of care provided.</li> <li>■ Complaints are dealt with in line with the home's complaints procedures.</li> <li>■ Effective monitoring systems are implemented and reviewed.</li> </ul>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))</p>	<p>31 March 2024</p>
<p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the children's reviewing officer is aware of changes to children's care planning.</p>	<p>31 March 2024</p>
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that consent is obtained for any monitoring or surveillance used to safeguard children.</p>	<p>21 April 2024</p>



<p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>The registered provider should ensure that consequences used to support children's behaviour are restorative in nature.</p>	<p>21 April 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to records about agency members of staff.</p>	<p>21 April 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p>	<p>21 April 2024</p>

<p>Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))</p>	21 April 2024
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p>	21 April 2024
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to records of agency staffing being included on rosters to ensure that a record is kept of who has worked in the home.</p>	21 April 2024
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(b))</p>	21 April 2024

## **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:** 2501791

**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:** Lucy Knox

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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