

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24/01/2017
Unique reference number	1240433
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Esland North Limited
Registered provider address	1 Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual	Lyndsey Sim
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Tina Ruffles

Inspection date	24/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff provide good-quality, nurturing care, and young people settle quickly and make progress in key areas of their lives.
- Staff are effective at encouraging young people to engage in education, and there are improved outcomes.
- Young people have numerous opportunities to have an input into their individual plans and the running of the home.
- There are strong safeguarding practices at the home, and young people are kept safe.
- Missing-from-home episodes and incidents of negative behaviour have significantly reduced.
- Staff complete key-working sessions with young people.
- The newly formed staff team has received quality training and induction, and receive continuous learning and mentoring.
- The manager supports staff to meet young people's needs through regular, reflective supervision and team meetings.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. (regulation 5(c)) Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.8)

In particular, ensure that challenges are made by managers in response to a placing authority's inadequate performance, including bringing matters to the attention of the director of children's services.

- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.3)

Specifically, ensure that staff sign and date reviewed and updated documents in a timely fashion.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company and was registered in July 2016. This is the first full inspection since its opening.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people settle quickly due to staff's support during their introduction to the home. They make progress in key areas of their lives due to the good-quality, nurturing care provided by staff. Positive relationships develop as staff take a genuine interest in young people and enjoy spending time with them. One professional said, 'The stability of the placement is a big thing as [name of young person] was bouncing around places. We can now begin to work with them.' An initial baseline assessment provides comprehensive information about young people's starting points in all areas of their development. Staff research the shortfalls in their knowledge and receive specific training to enhance this. This ensures that staff are clear about young people's physical, emotional, social and cultural needs and can meet them. Specific training includes topics such as autism and the Romany gypsy culture. Staff are sensitive to the home's environment, food and leisure, for example purchasing particular food and music CDs. This helps young people to feel secure by having familiar things around them and encourages a sense of belonging. The staff team is effective at encouraging young people to engage in education. They have close links with professionals and listen to young people's views to provide bespoke education plans. These include singing lessons. Most young people willingly participate in learning and training, either at college or through home tuition. For newly admitted young people, there is sometimes the need for them to settle first. Staff ensure that these young people follow school routines. Staff also promote education through access to computer programs. Some young people, who have had no recent educational input, make significant progress. This leads to better opportunities for employment. Young people's health needs are met through their attendance at medical appointments. Staff provide well-balanced meals, and young people are educated about unhealthy choices. For one young person, this means a significant reduction of sugary drinks, although this is still met with some resistance. Young people's physical health improves through participating in activities such as swimming and trampolining. Young people have new experiences and their confidence grows with improved self-esteem. There are numerous opportunities for young people to have an input into their individual plans and the running of the home. Weekly meetings offer the opportunity for young people to express their views. They feel listened to, and, for one, this has resulted in them owning pet rabbits. Staff use informal opportunities to educate young people on issues that affect them. Work completed and displayed	

by the young people about culture and religion demonstrates an understanding of each other's identity and heritage. This has led to young people becoming more tolerant of each other with peer relationships developing.

Young people know how to complain, and they have access to an advocate. The manager is supportive and challenged the placing authority about the lack of planning for a young person leaving the home. However, this needed further escalation as the young person's behaviour deteriorated because of the placing authority's lack of action.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Clear and concise risk assessments outline young people's vulnerabilities. Staff work with young people who help to write their individual behaviour management plan. This provides important insight into young people's negative behaviour and the response that they would like to receive from staff. Young people become more open with staff due to the developing trusting relationships. They take ownership of their plans, with increased cooperation and less negative behaviour as a result. Strong safeguarding practices at the home help staff to keep young people safe. Staff regularly review and update plans following incidents. The manager increases staffing levels when necessary. Risk management is good. One professional reported, 'Staff are not risk averse. They are realistic and work with [name of young person].' Missing-from-home episodes have significantly reduced, and independent return home interviews are always provided. Staff have a good understanding of the risk factors and indicators when young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation. High staffing levels promote young people's safety. During the inspection, a number of items were found hidden in a young person's room, which indicates ongoing child sexual exploitation. This illustrates staff's vigilance and attentiveness. Young people and their parents say that young people feel safe living at the home. One parent said, '[Name of young person] feels very safe in their hands.' Staff have a good knowledge of the impact of young people's backgrounds. They positively address underlying issues rather than focusing on young people's negative behaviour. Staff are enthusiastic and their creative key-working sessions cover a range of topics such as bereavement and loss. Young people engage in the sessions, become reflective, and negative behaviour improves. The good relationships developed with staff enable young people to address their emotional needs in a safe and nurturing environment.	

Restraint is rarely needed. This is because staff have good de-escalation techniques. There have been only three physical interventions since the home opened. These were to keep a former resident safe from their self-harming behaviours. Detailed recording gives an accurate account of events and the action taken. Staff explore the young person's perspective and feelings after the incident. This helps the young person to look at alternative ways to self-regulate.

The proactive staff consult other professionals when young people's behaviour causes concern. Their access to a psychologist ensures that timely advice and support are available for young people. This helps to prevent further deterioration of their emotional well-being.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The current manager has only been in the position for a couple of months after the original manager left the post during the probationary period. She is applying for registration with Ofsted. The manager has worked at the home since it opened, and has successfully made the transition into leadership. She feels fully supported by the responsible individual and the regional manager. Her enrolment on the company's management development programme is furthering her professional development. The newly formed staff team is bonding well. Staff receive good-quality training and induction, which ensures that the staff team members are appropriately skilled to undertake their roles. Staff have individual development plans and receive continuous learning and mentoring. The manager supports staff to meet young people's needs through regular, reflective supervision and team meetings. One member of staff said, 'She is a fantastic manager. She is approachable, and you know the support is there.' The manager and diverse staff team come from a range of different backgrounds and are motivated and enthusiastic. The staff team shares the same child-focused ethos. Two members of staff won the company's annual award for their safeguarding work. Staff bring new ideas to improve young people's experiences. They have developed an 'Adventurer' file that provides young people with a range of new outside activities and experiences to boost their confidence. Staff actively involve young people in the home's development plan to improve the decoration and to work on the garden project. This helps them to take ownership of their home. The manager's focus has been on developing the team so that there is consistency of practice. Staff also learn to record clearly and objectively. The quality standards	

are referenced within documents so that staff are able to link their work to legislation. They learn how this impacts on young people's care. The manager empowers staff to update risk assessments and behaviour management plans. Good monitoring processes ensure that young people are safeguarded, and progress continues to be made. However, some reviewed plans need a more timely response from staff to confirm that they have read the documents and are aware of the changes. This makes sure that there is a consistent approach as soon as possible after changes are made.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other, and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Whenever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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