

1245565

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home that is registered to care for three children who may have social 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 has been no registered manager since 9 June 2024. The current manager has been in post since September 2024. He has applied to register with Ofsted.

There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection date: 26 November 2024

Date of last inspection: 9 April 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

One child has lived at the home for three months. They have settled well and personalised their bedroom. The child has made good progress during this time. Staff have helped the child to establish a new routine, which means they are sleeping better and able to take part in education. The child is eating regular meals and has become healthier as a result.

The child has built positive relationships with staff. They spoke warmly about the team and said they go out to do activities. The child has an individual tutor who provides formal learning. They have engaged well with a bespoke timetable. Informal learning opportunities are also provided, such as visits to places of interest. This has helped the child to develop their knowledge.

The manager and staff listen to the child when they express views about their care. The child has been able to share their worries and opinions, which have been listened to and, where possible, acted upon.

Four other children have moved in and out of the home since the last full inspection. Two children were unhappy with their overall care plans. This made it difficult for them to settle at the home. Two other children moved due to increasing risks relating to their behaviour. Some of these risks were not known at the time the children moved in. The manager and staff worked flexibly with local authorities to provide ongoing care until alternative provisions were identified.

The manager and staff have worked hard to keep children safe from harm. This has not been without challenge at times. Staff have managed several serious incidents when children have found it hard being away from their families. One child was at risk of exploitation, which also impacted on their emotional well-being. Staff have shown resilience during these situations and kept children safe in most incidents. There has been one incident where shortfalls in practice were identified. A child was at increased risk of harm. Managers took appropriate action to address the shortfalls. They recognise the importance of reducing risk of shortfalls recurring that can impact on children's safety.

Some children have made allegations about members of staff. These have been investigated and had oversight from the relevant agencies. The outcomes from allegations are clearly recorded. One child who moved on from the home received a letter informing them of the outcome of the investigation.

The manager has not ensured that all areas of the home are free of potential hazards. There were some items in the garden that could pose a risk to children.

The previous registered manager left the home in June 2024. There have been two different managers since then, and the home has been without a permanent deputy manager. The manager is supported by the responsible individual, who has very good knowledge of the staff team. Her support has mitigated what has been a challenging period for the home.

Leaders and managers acknowledge that the home has been through numerous challenges. As well as frequent changes of manager, several staff have left. This has impacted on the remaining staff. Staff say that team morale is low. The manager is working towards achieving increased stability; however, this will take time to embed. A new deputy has recently been appointed to support the manager in his work.

Senior managers have started to implement some new initiatives to encourage positive recruitment. This includes an improved training and support package, a newly appointed regional manager for the home and improvements to the physical environment. These are in the early stages and not yet fully benefiting the team.

Managers have investigated and responded to a considerable number of concerns raised about staff since the full inspection. Concerns have related to practice and professional conduct. Actions have been taken to address these concerns, and the manager is committed to maintaining improvements. This work is long term to ensure ongoing consistency of practice and accountability across the team.

A piece of significant information about a member of staff who has worked at the home was highlighted to the responsible individual on inspection. Although managers had been informed of this previously, it had not been followed up. This has not impacted on children's welfare but has the potential to if not acted upon.

The requirement and recommendations will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/04/2024	Full	Good
02/05/2023	Full	Good
04/04/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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.

Requirements	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff carry out the day-to-day care of children effectively, consulting with managers where necessary. This also relates to ensuring that staff are provided with sufficient stability, support and management oversight to fulfil their roles.	28 January 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (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 Home's Regulations, including the quality standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand that restraint also includes restricting a child's liberty of movement. This includes, for example, changes to the physical environment of the home, such as using high door handles, and the removal of physical aids, such as turning off a child's electric wheelchair. Restrictions such as these, and all other restrictions of liberty of movement, should be recorded as restraint. Some children, perhaps due to impairment or disability, may not offer any resistance, but such measures should still constitute a restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)
- The registered person should ensure that children feel safe. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. This includes sharing with children the outcomes of investigations regarding all allegations made against staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1245565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: Kim Bell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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