

1264840

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 provides medium- to long-term care and accommodation for up to three young people who have complex social and emotional needs.

The registered manager left on 12 April 2019. A new manager has started in post and has submitted an application to register.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/05/2018	Full	Good

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(c)(ii))	02/11/2019
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32(1))	02/11/2019
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))	02/11/2019
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(1)(4)(a)(b)(7)(a))	02/11/2019
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	02/11/2019

Recommendations

- The Statement of Purpose is of particular importance to this Standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a 'Statement of Purpose' (regulation 16 and schedule 1). The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 14, paragraph 3.5)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet 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 homes regulations including the quality standards', p 15, paragraph 3.9) This refers specifically to the safe storage of food.
- The children's guide should help children to understand: what the day to day routines of the home are ('what happens in the home'); the Statement of Purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there); how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure; how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 24, paragraph 4.22)
- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p 28, paragraph 5.15)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left the home and a new manager has joined. Following the new manager taking up their post, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out.

Children benefit from good relationships with staff who are thoughtful about the care and support they provide for children. The individual needs of children are known and staff are well informed about how to meet these needs. For example, staff have sought the advice from a religious leader about how to meet one child's religious needs.

Staff ensure that there is meticulous placement planning in place for each child. This planning has included, for the new child, staff taking prompt action to identify a school placement for the start of the new academic year.

An incentive scheme has helped to encourage one child to increase their school attendance. However, staff have not ensured that suitable structured activities are in place for one child who is still waiting for a school placement. This represents a lost opportunity to promote the child's learning and help him to prepare for school.

Staff help children to understand how to stay physically and emotionally healthy. For example, staff have worked with one child to help him think about the impact of smoking on his physical health. Staff ensure that all children are registered with primary health services and make referrals for specialist services when needed to reflect children's individual needs.

Children attend various clubs in the community. This includes children attending youth clubs and boxing clubs and trying new pursuits, such as clay pigeon shooting and singing and trekking with alpacas. These varied opportunities help children to make new friends and to gain new valuable skills.

Children are supported to stay in touch with their family and friends. One parent told the inspector she was more than happy with the care given to her child.

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

Staff pay attention to ensuring that children's care is personalised and that plans consider the child's past experiences and their wishes and feelings. Regularly updated risk management plans ensure that staff are aware of the risks posed to children and the strategies to reduce and respond to risk. This helps increase children's safety.

Children participate in direct work with members of staff. These sessions include topics such as healthy eating, healthy relationships, anger management, county lines and safe internet use. This targeted work means that children are made more aware of how to keep themselves safe.

Children have access to the internet in keeping with their plans. Agreements with children about the safe use of technology and parental controls support children's safety.

Children are encouraged to behave well and responsible behaviour is promoted through individualised incentive schemes and rewards. This has helped two children to need less supervision by adults and to have the opportunity of free time away from the home.

There have been some occasions when physical intervention has been used to keep children and others safe. Records are clear and debriefings for staff and children are child-focused and enable prompt reflection and learning.

Staff receive a range of training to raise awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities. The manager has an established link with the designated officer and staff know how to raise safeguarding concerns. When a child has been missing from the home staff have reported this appropriately.

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

Children benefit from care and support from a permanent staff team which has a mix of skills and experience. Gaps in the rota are covered by regular bank staff and occasional agency staff. This helps children to receive consistent care.

The manager is child-focused and aspirational for children. A member of staff told the inspector, 'When you see what her vision is you start following through. I thought I was big on kids but she is something else.'

Staff are positive about the support they receive from the manager. New staff benefit from a period of induction, which includes training relevant to their role. All staff receive supervision in keeping with the company policy, which they say they find useful. However, not all staff who have been in post for over a year have received an appraisal. This represents a missed opportunity for staff to explore and strengthen their practice and consider their development needs.

Managers ensure that permanent staff are appropriately vetted prior to starting work with children. However, there are shortfalls in the vetting of agency staff. For example, managers do not secure sufficient evidence that a full employment history and a reference are obtained from the last employer. This leaves children at risk of exposure to adults who may be unsuitable.

The manager has established positive relationships with the range of professionals relevant to the children's care. However, this has not extended to consulting the relevant partners when reviewing the suitability of the location of the home. This represents a missed opportunity to use the knowledge of key stakeholders, such as the local police, to better understand the potential risks posed to children in the local community.

The manager has carried out a review of the quality of care to inform the development

plan for the home. However, managers are unable to provide evidence that independent visits to the home take place in line with regulation. This reduces the external oversight of the operation of the home

Children have enjoyed personalising their bedrooms. However, there are shortfalls in the physical conditions of the home and garden. For example, a kitchen cupboard door is broken and a blind is missing from a kitchen window. A downstairs bathroom is grubby. There is no plug to the sink or the bath, the wall tiles are cracked and laminate flooring does not meet the wall. A blind in a child's bedroom cannot be opened as there is no pull cord. Grass to the gardens is unkempt and plants are overgrown. In addition, food is not safely stored. One child told the inspector that the conditions of the home made him unhappy. A lack of attention by managers to the maintenance of the home detracts from children living in a comfortable and homely environment.

The manager has reviewed the home's statement of purpose and the children's guide. However, these two documents lack attention to detail. For example, the statement of purpose mentions the name of another home and the details of the management arrangements are incorrect. The children's guide does not give children enough information about the daily routines of the home. Consequently, information about the home is not clear to those who need it.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have 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.

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: 1264840

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lyndsey Sim

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Alison Cooper, social care inspector

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