

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 is registered to provide care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious or 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 and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 8 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/11/2022	Full	Good
17/08/2021	Full	Good
04/09/2019	Full	Good
30/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. Two children have moved out. One child has moved out of the home in a planned and positive way. The other child left the home in an unplanned way following a serious incident. This child had lived at the home for over two years. Before this incident, the child expressed their worries about leaving the home to live independently and a long transition was planned to support them back to their hometown. This ending had a negative impact on this child's experience and well-being.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident that occurred at the setting is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements. The organisation has worked openly with all professionals and has taken prompt action from the learning carried out. They have acknowledged that staff failed to keep children safe. As a result, children could have suffered serious harm and this has led to poor outcomes for one child. This is reflected in the inadequate judgement.

More positively, children told inspectors that they liked living in the home. They know how to make a complaint and could name someone they could talk to.

Staff support children with their health and wellbeing. Children's emotional health needs are expertly addressed. Staff demonstrate an ability to seek specialist help when this is necessary and have undertaken research to meet specific needs of the children they care for. There are strong links with health professionals and specialist services. The multi team approach means that children's needs are responded to effectively.

There is a positive ethos about the importance of education. As a result, children do well in education and have full-time attendance. The home advocates for children's education and works closely with educational establishments to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved academically for children. This support helps children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. It also provides them with a better opportunity to reach their full potential and increases their life chances.

Children live in a well-maintained, comfortable and homely environment. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere that is full of warmth and respect. Children's belongings fill the home, and their photos, certificates and achievements are proudly on display. Books and games are easily accessible and soft furnishings help to create a nurturing environment. Children personalise their bedrooms and this allows them to take a sense of pride in their home and promotes their well-being.

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

Staff have failed to follow children's plans and risk strategies to keep children safe. As a result, a serious incident occurred, and children could have been harmed. The manager and staff did not demonstrate that they have the skills to keep children safe.

There have been two significant incidents that have not been reported, recorded and responded to appropriately by staff and managers. For example, when staff had identified that the home's car key was missing, staff failed to follow the safeguarding procedures and retired to bed. Documents show that staff had recorded both children were in their bedrooms the following the morning, still unaware that children had left the home. These failures led to an incident, which placed both children at significant risk of harm. Prior to this, door alarms had been temperamental and alternative safeguarding strategies were not implemented in the interim. These significant shortfalls and failures to safeguard children left children at risk of harm and have led to poor outcomes for one child. Managers took swift action once they were alerted to the concern. Learning has taken place, and new strategies have been implemented to try and prevent this from happening again. Appropriate investigations by professionals are under way.

Managers have completed a review of the premises to assess the suitability and location of the home. The manager has not considered known information about the local area, which could pose a potential risk. As a result, staff are not provided with all the necessary information they need to safeguard children when they are out in the community.

Staff ensure that the home environment is safe for children to live in. Children take part in regular fire drills and have personal emergency evacuation plans in place to ensure that they know how to evacuate the home safely in case of such an emergency.

Managers follow safeguarding processes appropriately when children have raised concerns about staff's practice. Information is promptly shared with other professionals, investigated and appropriate actions taken.

Staff educate children around risk. Staff complete key-work sessions and engage in conversations where safeguarding scenarios are discussed with children to address identified risks and raise their awareness about topics of concern. This direct work includes online safety, anti-bullying and knife crime. This positive work enhances the children's knowledge of risk and allows them to take the lead in their learning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022. She is experienced and is currently completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential childcare. Despite her experience, significant shortfalls were identified at this inspection.

Management oversight of the home fails to safeguard children. Managers fail to implement effective monitoring systems to enable them to identify shortfalls in the quality of care provided to children. For example, managers have repeatedly failed to address regulatory breaches in regulation 13, the leadership and management standard, such as effective oversight of incidents and inability to recognise shortfalls in staff practise and car key handovers. This failure to meet requirements means that children's care continues to be compromised.

Managers' monitoring is ineffective and fails to protect children from harm. They do not monitor, review and evaluate significant incidents, including missing-from-home episodes, effectively. Managers lack professional curiosity and fail to identify shortfalls. For example, managers did not explore how one child was able to leave the home during the night without staff knowledge, when door alarms should have been activated, in line with their risk assessment. As a result, a similar incident occurred, that may have been prevented.

Partner agencies have mixed views about the service. Some professionals are pleased with the care provided to children. However, others recognise that the manager and staff have failed to safeguard children and plans for their care have been disrupted as a consequence of this.

The majority of the staff hold the required level 3 diploma. A small number of staff are currently working to achieve this, and plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. However, one staff member has not obtained their level 3 qualification in residential childcare within the required time frame. This means that not all staff have been trained to the required level to meet children's needs.

Overall, staff speak positively about their roles, and they enjoy working in the home. Staff feel supported by each other and the management team.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to the registered manager and staff taking proactive and effective action when issues are identified to prevent children being harmed or at risk of harm. This also relates to the registered manager and staff following safeguarding policies as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	28 January 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	28 January 2024

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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 use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) This requirement was raised at two previous inspections. This specifically relates to the manager implementing monitoring systems which are effective in promoting practice which ensures that children’s safety and welfare are prioritised.	
The care planning standard is that children— have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(b) (2)(b)(iii)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children have a positive experience moving from the home and that this is in line with their local authority plans.	28 January 2024
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—	28 January 2024

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

The relevant date is—

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.
(Regulation 32 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

This registered manager must ensure that staff supporting children have the relevant qualifications within the required timescales.

Recommendation

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. This specifically relates to the manager consulting with relevant agencies with regard to 'Prevent' to ensure effective review of the risks associated with the location of the home to safeguard children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1264840

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: Karl Haywood

Registered manager: Ellie Twaites

Inspectors

Marianne Grandfield, Social Care Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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