

2483823

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for a maximum of three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager registered in July 2020. He is suitably qualified and has considerable management experience.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 17 December 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

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

The care of children

Children receive care from a stable and dedicated team of staff who have the skills and experience to meet their needs.

The home has been proactive in securing educational placements for all children, despite the short amount of time that they have been at the home.

Staff ensure children have a voice. The home has recently introduced a 'You say, we did' system. This enables the children to put forward requests and share ideas. For example, one child asked for a pet hamster. This was purchased as an outcome. This is a good example of acting on the children's views and wishes.

Children enjoy living at the home. One child said to her social worker, 'This is the best place ever.'

Children are supported to engage in a variety of enjoyable activities in the home and community. One child has recently started ballet. Others have enjoyed several activities and day trips. This has supported the children to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Staff have supported children to maintain relationships with family members, despite the restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. They have used technology well to ensure that the restrictions have not formed a barrier to maintaining relationships.

The safety of children

Children are kept safe in the home because of good staffing ratios and children are well supervised. These measures prevent them coming to harm.

Staff have a good understanding of children's vulnerabilities and how to keep them safe. Risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of children. The manager is in the process of reviewing these, to make them more user friendly.

Staff use positive behaviour management strategies. There have not been any physical interventions in several months. This is a result of the consistent boundaries and structure staff have in place for children.

The team has received training in a therapeutic model. The model is fully embedded into care practice. Staff demonstrate empathy and playfulness in their work with children. The focus is on praising and rewarding positive outcomes.

All staff have completed safeguarding training and know how to keep children safe. However, some scheduled training, particularly in relation to whistle-blowing procedures, could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. The manager is ensuring that staff complete online training in this area.

Leaders and managers

The home is led by an experienced manager, although he is new to the home. He has a clear vision, which is shared with the staff team. He has improved staff confidence and morale. The manager and staff are ambitious to continue to improve the care they provide for the children. One staff member said, 'It's been like a breath of fresh air.' Another staff member said, 'I enjoy coming to work, I have my bounce back in my step.'

Staff supervisions and team meetings have become more structured since the manager took over. These take place regularly and are better organised. Staff are encouraged to take responsibility for the conduct of the meetings because they now take it in turns to chair.

Partnership working is a strength of the home. The staff work well with a range of agencies, including teachers, therapists and other specialist health services.

Placements are carefully planned and the staff team are now part of this process. This has led to good placement matching and a shared commitment to the children. All staff have a good understanding of the needs of the children in their care. One staff member said, 'If we get the children back home or with a foster family, then we've done our job properly.'

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2483823

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Registered provider address: Esland Limited, Suites 1 and 5 Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: James Barlow

Registered manager: Karl Haywood

Inspector

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

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