

2623568

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and provides care for up to three children who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties and have complex needs.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

The manager registered in April 2021 as part of the registration of the home. The manager is currently undertaking a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

This is the home's first inspection since registration.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since registration, two children have come to live at the home. Despite staff working hard to support the children to live together harmoniously, the newly established staff team has not had the skills and experience to manage the competing and very complex attachment needs of the two children. While staff have sought professional advice about how to best support the children's emotional health needs, the depth of the children's individual needs, combined with changes in staffing, has meant that children have felt insecure and, on occasion, they have hurt themselves or each other. This has hampered children's experiences of living at the home and has resulted in plans being made for one child to move to another home within the organisation.

Education progress is mixed. For one child, bespoke educational arrangements are helping to identify her individual needs and support her learning. However, for another child, weak planning has resulted in unnecessary delays in her commencing school at the beginning of the autumn term. A lack of attention by staff to promote daily routines and encourage informal learning means that the child is lacking essential support to ensure her future preparedness for school.

Staff are sensitive to children's health needs. For one child, helping with shopping for fresh foods and a flexible approach to the preparation of meals have helped to extend the range of foods that the child eats. This change of diet has helped her to better manage her bowel health.

There are clear arrangements in place for children to receive medication. However, on two occasions, staff failed to record when a child had refused the medication that they had been offered. Failure to keep accurate medication records could result in children not receiving the treatment they need.

Children have enjoyed days out and experiences such as going for a meal, shopping and visits to the cinema. Staff are aware of children's interests and ensure that children have the time to explore these interests more. For example, staff often spend time playing board games with one child and sing and play the ukulele with another.

Children are well supported in developing their independence skills. Both children keep a pet and make sure that their animals are well cared for. Children routinely help with food shopping and cleaning. Thoughtful support from staff has helped one child to understand how to develop healthy personal care routines.

Staff support children to keep in touch with their family and friends in keeping with their plans and wishes. A parent was positive about the support her child receives and told the inspector, 'I am happy with (my child) being there.'

The home is clean, tidy and welcoming. Children have enjoyed personalising their bedrooms and choosing décor that reflects them as individuals. There are plans to further improve the home with the purchase of a new sofa and play equipment for the garden.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children's plans and risk assessments are individualised and provide staff with clear guidance about children's needs and relevant risk-reduction strategies. The children require high-staffing ratios to keep them safe. The availability of staff has meant that less familiar staff have worked in the home. This has caused children anxiety, especially as the children are already struggling with group living. Despite a calm and considered approach by staff, on occasion, children's anxiety has manifested into challenging behaviours, including self-harm.

Staff have received training in behaviour management and the team is working to embed an approach based on rewards, incentives and natural consequences. Physical intervention has been used to support the safety of children. However, the registered manager's oversight of behaviour management records is weak. This means that it is not clear that staff and children are spoken to following them being held. Poor oversight limits the registered manager's ability to understand children's views and whether practice is safe and proportionate.

Allegations made by children about staff conduct are appropriately shared with external agencies. However, on one occasion, the registered manager failed to notify the regulator of a significant incident where a social worker had raised a query about the immediate response of staff following a child dropping from a first-floor window of an adjacent building. Failure to notify Ofsted of significant events reduces the external oversight of the operation of the home.

Children are involved in developing the plans for their care through general conversation, direct work and weekly meetings that include each other and staff. Staff try hard to respond to children's views in a safe, child-focused and thoughtful way. For example, one child's move from the home has been safely delayed at her request to give additional time for introductions and goodbyes. Creativity in enlisting support from familiar staff from the wider organisation has assisted her to feel comfortable to move.

Safeguarding and professional boundaries training has helped to raise staff's general awareness as to their responsibility to promote children's safety and welfare. However, not all staff have received training to enhance their understanding of child exploitation and radicalisation. This is a missed opportunity for staff to develop their knowledge of the signs and symptoms of these types of abuse.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The team is a newly established team with several staff working through a period of probation. Staffing changes, including the need for increased staffing for one child, have resulted in unfamiliar staff working in the home at times. Both children have found this unsettling and because of this have struggled to regulate their behaviours and emotions.

In response to staffing issues, in recent weeks, the registered manager has worked a considerable number of hours on shift. This has limited his capacity to oversee all aspects of the management and development of the home. This has had a detrimental effect. Consequently, staff have not received timely access to training necessary to raise their awareness of children's support needs, including sensory processing, dyspraxia and ligature awareness training. This has contributed to the mixed experiences and outcomes for children.

Staff do not receive supervision or probationary reviews at the frequency required by the organisation. This is a particular concern, given that the team is new, and some staff are new to the organisation and/or the area of work. This means that staff are not provided with essential support and regular opportunities to reflect on their practice and review how well they are safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The registered manager has failed to undertake routine monitoring of the service as required by the organisation. This has reduced his ability to fully understand and improve the quality of care provided to children. Senior managers have been slow to identify the shortfalls in the registered manager's oversight. However, more recently, the organisation has acted to provide the registered manager with additional support.

The registered manager demonstrated a transparent and reflective approach during this inspection and readily recognised the shortfalls in the managerial oversight of the service.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii))	22 October 2021
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 the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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)(e)(h))	22 October 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	5 November 2021

The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	5 November 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	5 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that prescribed medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered provider should ensure that Ofsted and any other relevant persons are notified if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63 , paragraph 14.10)

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: 2623568

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: Elisabeth Brownlees

Registered manager: James Leneve-Roff

Inspector

Alison Cooper, Social Care Inspector

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