

2647445

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation owns and runs the home. The home is registered to provide care for one child who may present with social and emotional difficulties.

The home does not have a registered manager. An acting manager has been appointed, but there has been a significant delay in progressing their registration.

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

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: 16 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child is currently living at the home, although another child has moved on from the home during this inspection period.

Staff understand children's needs well. They understand their personalities, likes and dislikes, as well as how to support them if they are angry or upset. This helps children and staff to have good relationships, which is evident from speaking to the child currently living at the home. Relationships are supported by children having fun and engaging in activities of their choice with staff. Staff think creatively to make sure children enjoy themselves. This includes one child having lessons on how to become a DJ because they showed an interest in music.

Children receive guidance in all aspects of their lives through one-to-one time with staff. These discussions are recorded and show the feedback from the child. There are good examples of records of one-to-one sessions being written personally to the child about what they had learned. Input from a therapist helps children to address and process the trauma they have experienced prior to living at the home.

Children are listened to during 'Let's Talk' meetings, and their wishes and feelings are acted on. Children know how to make a complaint and feel able to raise their worries. However, there are instances of staff not being proactive in promoting a child's culture or taking the initiative to prompt discussion or interest about their background or religion.

Good links with local authorities and virtual schools prevent delays when children are not attending school or college. The manager is proactive in convening meetings with social workers and the virtual school when children are not attending. In these instances, a tutor is employed to teach the child at a level suitable to their ability. Children are guided and supported by staff about the need for education and how it will help them achieve their aspirations.

Staff endeavour for children to contact and spend time with their family. Families are encouraged to visit the home or speak to children on the phone when it is deemed safe to do so. This supports children to form their identity as they get older and may increase their support network when they reach adulthood.

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

Staff know the risks to children. Comprehensive risk assessments and missing-from-home documents are updated regularly and provide clear detail about the child and the actions staff should take to keep them safe. Staff are aware of legal orders and how they apply to the child. Regular communication with the social worker keeps them informed. Children's plans are detailed and useful for staff to read and apply. This helps staff to keep children safe and meet their needs.

The manager has undertaken a thorough location risk assessment that is tailored to the needs of the child living in the home. The manager's assessment has led to steps being taken to seek assistance from other safeguarding agencies to assist with managing the risk of child exploitation.

The staff team has experience of working with children who have complex emotional and mental health needs. On one occasion, staff worked with other agencies to safeguard a child who displayed self-injurious behaviour. Staff showed commitment and perseverance towards the child. They applied their knowledge of self-injurious behaviours effectively to keep the child safe from harm. The staff team also has a good grasp of children's vulnerabilities and exploitation. Indicators of exploitation are identified and acted on quickly.

Staff receive training in relation to understanding and managing children's behaviour and how to physically intervene if required. When children are held, the interventions have been proportionate and well recorded, and debriefs have taken place afterwards. There has been one incident of a disproportionate physical intervention, which was dealt with quickly by management. When allegations have been made against staff, appropriate and prompt action has been taken to ensure the child's safety and procedures are followed. New staff are inducted well. They understand their responsibility to identify and raise any instances when staff practice falls short of good or when it could be harmful to children.

There are safer recruitment processes in place that appear effective in respect of verifying an employee's suitability to work with children. There was one instance of a staff member's pertinent qualifications not being verified. However, this was judged to be an isolated incident and did not pose a risk to children. When agency staff are used, quality assurance processes are in place to ensure agencies have undertaken due diligence around the suitability of the staff they provide.

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

There is no registered manager at the home. This has been an ongoing situation for over a year. There has been a lack of intervention by senior leaders to resolve the registration of the acting management arrangements. This is increasing the risk of instability for children living at the home.

Management recordings in the home's logbook are not always clear. This has led to a lack of clarity as to when the manager is in or out of the home. Management decisions and their rationale to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff are not always recorded. These shortfalls raise issues over accountability should incidents happen or be reported at later dates.

Staff feel supported on a day-to-day basis and during difficult periods. They have access to clinical supervision from the therapist. Some supervision sessions are delegated to senior staff, which helps develop their management skills. However, not all issues that have been discussed or arise from supervision have been fed back to

the manager. This lack of oversight has the potential to affect staff morale in the home.

Team meetings and 'house meetings' are frequent and well attended. Staff share their views and provide input during team meetings. House meetings enable the child to share their views and provide input as well. There are instances of the child's initials being used in house meetings, meaning they lack personalisation. There are examples of 'lessons learned' by the manager, which promote learning among the team. However, they are not fully embedded in staff practice and are currently minimal in scope.

Careful consideration is given before offering children a place at the home. All necessary information is gathered and considered to decide whether the home can meet a child's needs. Transitions are planned, even when children must leave their last home quickly. Admission documents help the staff and manager understand the experiences of the child and how they need to tailor their care.

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
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	12 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with Regulation 33 (4)(b). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life-story work or other direct work. Staff in the children's home should play a full role in work of this kind. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

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: 2647445

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Phipps

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Ed McCallum, Social Care Inspector

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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