

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 operates the home. It is registered to provide care for one child.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023. At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

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 and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2023	Full	Good
16/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Various incidents involving poor staff practice have produced widespread implications for the child. Staff suspensions and movement in the team have frequently left the child being cared for by staff they do not know. This has significantly undermined the manager's ability to offer consistent and effective care for the child.

There is an over-reliance on local authority practitioners to support the child. This has created delay in supporting the child to work through problematic and worrying issues in the child's life. Fundamentally, the organisation has failed to meet its obligations to the child and the child's local authority.

Not enough meaningful work has occurred in the home to support the child to better understand why professionals have concerns about the child's welfare. This resulted in the child being ill-informed about decisions that significantly affected their life. Sadly, this caused the child an unnecessary level of distress and confusion.

The child has limited opportunities to learn and enjoy a variety of fulfilling experiences. This is due to the child's life being mostly restricted to the home, including the child's limited access to a school tutor. Although there is a permissive legal order in place around restricting the child's liberty, this has been prolonged due to shortfalls in the care that the child has experienced. The implications of this have affected the child's mental health and quality of life.

The child told the inspector that they have hope in their future at the home. The child is looking forward to welcoming familiar staff back to the home who they have a good relationship with. New staff to the home have also started to establish a rapport with the child. Additionally, senior leaders in the organisation have quickly implemented an action plan to address the shortfalls identified at the inspection.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to act on significant information provided by the child's local authority during safeguarding meetings. In doing so, the organisation failed in its duty to share and act on information. Consequently, the staff's ability to offer the child the necessary level of support following concerns being raised by safeguarding professionals has been limited.

There has been a scattergun approach to applying safeguarding processes when concerns have been brought to the manager's attention. On occasion, this has contributed to a disorganised response from safeguarding agencies. Additionally, the manager has failed to seek outcomes from local authority investigations into concerns about the child's welfare. This undermines the need for a collaborative approach to safeguarding.

Ofsted has become increasingly concerned about the emergence of a closed culture. Despite this being raised with the provider, it has failed to address this concern sufficiently. Therefore, poor practice has persisted and significantly hindered the child's ability to make progress in their life.

There is a mix of agency, substantive and covering staff who care for the child. This has often resulted in a lack of accountability in the home. On one occasion, despite there being several staff in the home, the child was able to go missing from the home for a significant period. At the time of the inspection, the learning review was incomplete, despite this event being several weeks ago. This dilutes learning and increases the risk of repeated episodes of poor practice.

There has been a robust response when the child has been missing in the community. The staff have followed their manager's protocol and actively searched known areas of interest. On one occasion, this ensured that the child was not missing for a significant period due to effective communication with the police.

New staff to the home have not gone through fire safety procedures. Neither do all staff know how to respond to a domestic emergency, such as a gas or water leak. This lack of awareness from leaders and managers undermines their duty of care to the staff and the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There are systemic flaws in the oversight and action taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of care in the home. Plans that senior leaders have submitted to Ofsted have not been meaningfully acted on or reviewed. Consequently, the manager has struggled to cope with a makeshift staff team.

Senior leaders have failed to adequately cover the manager's absence in the home. This has shown a distinct lack of awareness around the vulnerabilities that are embedded in the team. This has resulted in the manager feeling isolated and, at times, overwhelmed.

Leaders and managers have not learned from previous examples of poor practice. New staff to the home have not received a sufficient induction programme. Therefore, expectations on new staff have been unrealistic and unfair. New staff have led shifts when they have been ill-equipped to do so. This means that the child is cared for by staff who have not been assessed by the management team as being competent.

New staff and longstanding agency staff have not received a supervision session concerning their role in the home. In the absence of this, these staff have not had the opportunity to hold important discussions in a formal forum around practice or development issues. This hinders reflective practice, so opportunities to improve staff practice are lost.

Staff are trained to apply a specific model of care that is promoted on the organisation's website. However, the model of care is not reflected in the home's statement of purpose. This means that stakeholders are receiving confusing messages about what care is delivered in the home.

The inspection revealed no defensive practice from leaders and managers. Leaders and managers demonstrated accountability when shortfalls were revealed, and they provided a sufficient action plan outlining how they intended to address these.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	15 May 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—	17 July 2024

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and	15 May 2024

ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(c)(d))	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation. The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b) (4)(b))	17 July 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children. The statement of purpose should reflect the model of care that is promoted on the organisation's website. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

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: Esland Ltd, Suite 1 & 5 , Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: David Phipps

Registered manager: Reece Noble

Inspector

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024