

2734020

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home that provides care for up to two children who may have social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home offers a 12-week assessment period to children, to assess their care needs before they move to longer-term care arrangements.

There has not been a registered manager at the home since November 2024. In addition, the responsible individual has been away from their role since July 2025. The inspection was led by the newly appointed manager.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. They spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children have moved on from the home. This has been following their assessment period in planned ways, in line with the home's model of care. These children both made progress and had a good experience overall. The child living at the home has settled very well. Despite their move being swift, managers shared information about the home and met with them on a video call and introduced key staff, prior to the move.

Managers and staff have quickly developed a very comprehensive understanding of the child's needs. Staff create a calm and nurturing environment, and this encourages the child to spend time with staff. As a result, staff have quickly built good relationships with the child. They will share their thoughts and feelings with staff and trusts them for support.

Staff embed routines that help the child to have healthy routines for hygiene, sleep and meals. Staff have promptly arranged health appointments and helped them to attend. This is an area of progress, the child has had new glasses and undergone dental treatment. Staff are helping the child to learn about the risks of vaping, and a reduction plan is in place.

The manager has developed a bespoke education plan, delivered through the home's tutor and staff led accredited modules. As a result of this flexible approach, the child is engaging in education. Staff actively seek out the child's views and encourage them to make day to day choices. The manager has listened to their feedback about their preference for this to be a more natural conversation throughout the week rather than a specific meeting.

Staff are promoting leisure activities, the child has enjoyed going to the gym and the boxing club. The child said that they like that the staff trust them and take them out often. This is also an area of progress for the child.

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

The child's key risks are well understood. The child's safety plans to manage these risks have been developed in consultation with relevant professionals including children's mental health services and the home's clinician. Staff actively listen to the child's views about what support they feel they need to keep them safe. They also explain to the child why specific measures are in place to manage risk and promote their safety.

Staff are attentive to the child's presentation, and they take prompt action to help them manage their emotions. As a result, there have been a low number of physical interventions required. Staff supervise the child in line with their plans. However, staff balance supervision requirements with enabling the child space and independence. This promotes their privacy and dignity.

The risk of missing is well considered in the child's plans. Children going missing is a significant risk. Despite this, there have been no instances of children being missing from the home. Staff utilise preventative measures effectively.

There have been two complaints by a child, these have similar themes around staff not maintaining professional boundaries in their interactions with children. For one complaint, the investigation was not robust and was delayed. Although these issues were later resolved by another senior leader, they affected the child's experience at the home because the complaint took nearly half of their time living there to reach a conclusion. Staff have undergone further training in respect of professional boundaries and have had guidance about careful use of language.

Overall, health and safety is well managed. However, the key to the medication cabinet had been left in the lock during the inspection. Although the office is generally not left unattended, this could increase the risk of the child having unsafe access to medication.

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

This has been a period of significant instability in leadership and management. There are internal processes ongoing that are reviewing shortfalls in leadership and management of the home.

The home has not had a registered manager since November 2024. An interim manager was appointed and applied to become registered; they withdrew this application leaving the organisation after just three months. In addition, the responsible individual has been away from their role since July 2025. The instability in leadership and management has resulted in a lack of direction and support for staff at times.

There is an insufficient number of staff qualified at the home. Currently only the manager, the deputy manager and one senior staff member are qualified. While other staff are enrolled and making progress, this does reduce the overall expertise of the staff team.

A permanent manager has very recently been appointed to the home. They are an experienced manager from within the organisation; they intend to apply to Ofsted to become registered. The new manager is being well supported by senior leaders from across the wider organisation. This has mitigated the absence of the responsible individual and enhanced management oversight at the home considerably.

Staff do receive formal supervision, and the organisation has a comprehensive training offer. This supports staff development and equips them well for their roles. Staff development is enhanced by input from the home's clinician. As a result, staff understand and care for children in accordance with the home's model of care.

There is a full and permanent staff team at the home, they bring a wealth of experience. There are some occasions where agency staff are used to support children's enhanced staffing ratios. All staff including agency staff are safely recruited, agency staff also receive a structured introduction to the home.

Senior leaders have recognised and acted in response to the shortfalls in leadership and management. As a result, this has minimised any impact upon children's experiences and progress.

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 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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) This specifically relates to the home having a permanent and registered manager. This also relates to the home having a present and active responsible individual, competently overseeing the quality of care at the home. Additionally, managers must ensure that there are a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff working at the home. Furthermore, that staff undertaking qualifications make timely progress towards completion in the required timescales.	15 January 2026
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))	15 January 2026

This specifically relates to managers ensuring that the home's complaints procedure is followed by all leaders and managers. Furthermore, that any investigations into complaints are comprehensive, and that any outcomes and actions are completed in a timely way.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. This includes safe storage of medication in line with children's assessed risks. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: 2734020

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: Kim Bell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Alison Snell, Social Care Inspector

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