

SC005067

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and provides medium- to long-term care and accommodation for up to six young people who have had adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated complex behaviours.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2018.

Inspection date: 5 March 2020

Date of last inspection: 26 November 2019

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

This inspection was brought forward due to escalating concerns identified in safeguarding notifications.

Since the last inspection, two young people have left, and one young person has moved in. At the time of the inspection, one young person was missing from care.

Experiences and progress for young people are mixed. One young person moved on from the home immediately after a challenging incident. Another young person moved on due to the impact of his escalating and challenging behaviours. The recently admitted young person has settled well and is making some good progress.

Poor maintenance of the home is an ongoing issue. A number of windows are broken and boarded up. The registered manager has failed to repair this damage in a timely manner. However, some aspects of the home environment have been repaired and improved. In addition, some young people now have pets. Unfortunately, these improvements continue to be undermined by damage to the home.

The inspection identified serious safeguarding concerns. The registered manager and staff do not effectively manage the risks that young people are exposed to. This is because, in some instances, staff and managers fail to identify that young people are at risk of harm and do not take the required action to keep them safe.

Risk assessments do not give staff clear guidance on how to manage risk. As a result, staff are inconsistent in implementing strategies to manage known risks. For example, a young person with a number of risks and vulnerabilities was able to access her mobile phone without the agreed level of staff supervision. In addition, a lack of clear guidance meant that staff were not consistently recording their actions to manage the risks. Furthermore, staff failed to check the young person's phone in line with the agreed protocol. Staff subsequently checked the young person's phone when she went missing from care. During these searches, they discovered an unknown telephone contact and images. This is indicative of poor staff oversight and management of risk.

Poor staff supervision contributed to a young person going missing from care. For example, staff did not follow the agreed protocol of supervising the young person at all times. As a result, the young person went missing. The young person remained missing at the time of the inspection.

Staff reported the young person missing to the police. She was deemed to be at high risk of harm. However, subsequent actions taken by the registered manager and staff were ineffective. For example, significant delays meant that a joint strategy meeting took place several days after the young person went missing. The registered manager did not escalate her concerns about this delay in a robust manner. This was a missed opportunity to agree a timely and co-ordinated response to manage risk. It is acknowledged that staff are now working alongside the police to locate the young person. The young person has maintained some contact with staff through telephone conversations.

Another young person has a number of vulnerabilities and risks associated with gang involvement and exploitation. As a result, her online activity and use of electronic devices is subject to high levels of staff supervision. Overall, staff manage this risk well and provide the young person with targeted support to help her understand risk. Unfortunately, the young person recently received a threatening phone message from a previous associate. However, the registered manager did not fully explore this incident with the young person's social worker. This lack of oversight was a missed opportunity to review the current plans to manage risk.

The recently formed leadership team is aware of the concerns raised by Ofsted during the inspection and is committed to making improvements to ensure that young people live in a safe and caring environment. This includes providing staff with an enhanced training programme and regular specialist oversight and review of their practice. As yet, these plans are in their infancy and do not demonstrate any meaningful impact.

Two requirements and three recommendations were raised at the last inspection. The registered manager has not made sufficient progress in addressing these shortfalls.

For example, staff have not yet had opportunities to fully reflect on the high level of challenging incidents in the home. This remains a missed opportunity to identify learning and improve staff practice. In addition, the registered manager has admitted another young person since the last inspection when they were planning to have a period of consolidation. This is despite a continued period of challenging incidents and instability. As a result, both requirements raised at the last inspection are repeated.

In addition, records of challenging incidents lack detail and oversight to identify learning. As a result, this recommendation is repeated.

The registered manager has made some improvements, for example she has sought specialist mental health support for one young person since the last inspection. In addition, staff now consistently record key learning from specialist advice and support services. As a result, the two remaining recommendations raised at the last inspection are met.

As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has raised one recommendation and four requirements, three of which are subject to a compliance notice. In addition, Ofsted has also issued a notice restricting accommodation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/08/2018	Full	Good
30/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 quality and purpose of care standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(i))*	10/04/20
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 take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(vi))*	10/04/20
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))*	10/04/20
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	10/04/20

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC005067

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: Elisabeth Brownlees

Registered manager: Lydia Harris

Inspector

Gareth Leckey, Social Care Inspector

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