

SC063794

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home, which provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024 and went on planned leave in November 2025. A manager was appointed to cover the home, and they registered with Ofsted in December 2025. They led the inspection.

At the time of the inspection, 2 children were living at the home. Both children were spoken with and shared their views.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2025	Full	Good
08/11/2023	Full	Good
31/01/2023	Full	Good
08/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress from their starting points. Children say they are happy living in the home and have people they can speak to. Staff and children form close, trusting relationships with each other. One child called the other her 'best friend' and said they like 'everything' about living in the home. Children and staff enjoy spending time together, and staff support children to manage challenges in relationships through empathetic discussions. Positive relationships contribute to a family atmosphere and help children to feel a strong sense of belonging.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved out of the home and one child has moved in. Managers and staff ensure that children's moves are well planned. Moves include visits that enable children to ask questions. This helps to alleviate anxieties children may have, and children settle quickly. One child's social worker described this as the most settled their child has been, and they attributed this to the support from staff and managers.

Children live in a home that is clean, well presented and has a warm, welcoming feel. Soft furnishings and decor contribute to a homely atmosphere. Staff put children's artwork and canvases that represent children's interests on display. Staff support children to personalise their bedrooms. This helps children to feel valued.

Staff have high aspirations for children and understand the importance of promoting education. Managers have advocated strongly for children to ensure they have what they need. When a child lost their full-time education placement, staff acted swiftly to explore alternative options, including attending a careers event. Showing children clear, achievable future opportunities helps them to stay engaged in learning.

Staff support children to spend time with people who are important to them. Children's families are positive about the care their children receive. A child's parent called the home 'great'. They described the staff who support their child as 'kind and thoughtful'. Positive relationships between staff and children's families help ensure effective information-sharing and promote a sense of stability and security for children.

Staff support children to develop independence skills. Children have the opportunity to prepare their own meals, budget their own money and take responsibility for their health appointments where appropriate. This helps to ensure that children have the skills they need to live more independently in the future.

Staff provide children with a range of activities that are individualised to their interests. All children enjoy holidays and trips out to theme parks, golf and ice skating. One child went abroad with staff, and the other enjoyed a cabin stay.

Activities and holidays enhance children's experiences and provide a sense of enjoyment.

Staff understand the value of healthy routines for children and hold regular discussions with children about positive routines and choices. However, staff have struggled to support one child to engage with a healthy sleeping routine. Managers are aware of this area for development and have a plan to address it.

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

Children say that they feel safe. Staff understand children's risks well, and risks reduce because of the support children receive living in the home. A youth offending order ended early for one child because of the progress they have made.

Staff use their knowledge and understanding of children to provide them with individualised support and empathetic care. Strategies staff use to de-escalate incidents are effective, and there have been no occasions where staff have had to use physical intervention to keep children safe.

Staff always speak to children after incidents; these discussions offer children the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and to express their feelings. Managers identify learning from these discussions and use them to inform children's plans. This helps to ensure that strategies are effective and continually developing.

Incidents of children going missing from care are rare. For some children, this represents a significant reduction in risk. Staff are proactive in searching for children when their whereabouts are unknown and welcome them back into the home in a nurturing and caring way. Staff talk to children about the reasons for going missing. While incidents of children going missing are generally well managed, on one occasion, there was a delay in a staff member reporting a child missing to police. Managers identified this shortfall in their evaluation of the incident and addressed it with the staff involved.

Staff regularly speak to children about risk. These discussions are informative and help children to understand how to stay safe.

Plans and risk assessments provide staff with clear guidance on the steps they need to take to keep children safe. Plans are regularly updated after incidents. An on-call system helps to ensure that staff have access to guidance when incidents occur. On one occasion, staff failed to follow on-call guidance relating to how an incident should be managed. Managers ensured this was addressed. No children came to harm, and learning was identified and shared with the wider team.

Children and staff benefit from the support of a specialised therapeutic clinician. The clinician holds regular meetings with staff and provides them with guidance on how to respond therapeutically to children's behaviours. This helps to ensure that staff practice is continually improving and that children receive individualised care and

support. An initial assessment is completed that identifies children's care and support needs. This informs children's plans.

Staff have not always acted in accordance with expectations relating to their professional conduct. There have been occasions where staff have shared inappropriate information with children and breached professional boundaries. Managers have taken swift, effective action to investigate and address the issues with practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Changes to the leadership and management of the home have been well managed. As a result, the transition has been smooth.

The manager is committed to ensuring a nurturing and caring environment for children. She is knowledgeable and understands the strengths and areas for development for staff and the home well.

Leaders and managers hold children's best interests at the heart of their decision-making and are strong advocates for children's views. They challenge in a professional way and escalate as needed to ensure that children have what they need.

The manager fosters positive relationships with other professionals. Social workers describe good communication and recognise the positive impact living at the home has on their children.

Staff say that they feel well supported. They describe the manager as approachable and say that they feel listened to and cared for. A staff member said that they feel they can speak to the manager about anything, and they called the manager 'brilliant'. All staff receive regular supervision; these discussions are reflective and help staff to continually develop in their roles.

Managers take effective action in response to shortfalls in staff practice. They complete comprehensive investigations that have clear outcomes. Managers identify and implement actions that help to develop the home and staff.

Robust recruitment policies and procedures help to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. While recruitment is generally managed well, the references for one staff member did not meet the expectations as set out in the organisation's policy. While a comprehensive induction and close monitoring of staff during probation periods helped to ensure there was no impact, inconsistent application of the policy reduces the level of assurance that robust recruitment checks provide. The manager had identified shortfalls in the recruitment of the staff member and has a clear plan to address them.

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
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; 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; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff follow protocols relating to reporting when children go missing from care. This also relates to ensuring that staff understand and follow guidance from on-call managers during incidents. This also relates to ensuring that staff act in accordance with the organisation's expectations of professional conduct, and that discussions with children always promote children's safety and wellbeing.	3 June 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to behaviours and daily routines. In particular, staff should ensure healthy sleep routines. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained. This includes ensuring that staff employment reference checks are carried out in line with their own policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC063794

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lesa Harrison

Registered managers: Bethany Merrifield and Laurie Harrison

Inspector

Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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