

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	01/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC387684
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Esland South Limited
Registered provider address	3rd Floor, Butt Dyke House, 33 Park Row, NOTTINGHAM NG1 6EE

Responsible individual	Lyndsey Sim
Registered manager	Sandra Furness
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	01/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	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 good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has sustained effectiveness since the last full inspection and it continues to offer a good service to young people. For example, young people are reducing their episodes of missing behaviour as they settle into the home and benefit from direct input of 1:1 sessions and advocacy services. Stability in young people's emotional health has increased due to positive and trusting relationship building with staff. Small but significant steps help young people continue to make progress. These include: reducing medication, engaging in education, finding a voice to complain, developing friendship groups and engaging with planning in preparation for living independently. When young people have not been consistently in education, clear boundaries are set to establish routines. Educational activities, such as trips to museums, airports, swimming and the gym, help to keep young people active and learning while awaiting an appropriate educational resource. This helps young people to maintain routines and boundaries, and keeps them learning new things. When young people do not make consistent progress in accordance with their care plans, records show that leaders and managers advocate on their behalf. In some cases this advocacy has not been effective, which has led to some delays in essential service delivery. No young people have been placed at risk as a result. However, some delays in care planning have occurred and essential documents such as personal education plans are not received. The registered manager was absent from the home for five months. Senior managers responded appropriately to this situation. However, the time without a manager affected the monitoring of the service. An interim manager provided cover during this period and maintained a good level of care for young people, but the monthly audits, staff supervisions and the six-monthly review of the quality of care suffered some delays. Despite this, staff spoken to feel that the team is strong, morale is increasing and they feel supported to undertake their jobs. The registered manager is back in post and the management tasks are now being addressed. The recommendations in this report are made to ensure continued	

progress. The registered manager knows the home and young people well, and she is aware of the strengths and weaknesses.

An independent person visits the home once a month and writes a report which takes into account the views of young people, professionals and parents. These reports do not currently include a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the young people.

The overall experiences of young people have been positive since the last inspection. Four young people have moved on from the home. The staff undertook some positive work to enable one young person to return home, and another had a planned transition into semi-independent living. The other two young people moved to more appropriate placements.

There has been a slight increase in incidents notified to the regulator since the previous inspection. The response of managers and staff to these incidents is positive, providing young people with the necessary resources and avoiding criminalising them whenever possible. The registered manager encourages the community police to visit the home regularly, which helps to build positive relationships and to reduce unwanted behaviours.

The response to complaints is good. Safeguarding issues are reported promptly to the appropriate agencies for investigation. Positive actions to deal with outcomes of investigations are taken, for example disciplinary action, support plans or restorative work with young people.

The registered manager and the staff team responded effectively to the previous requirement to ensure that better systems were put in place to plan young people's appointments and to ensure that they attend. Two recommendations have also been acted on, showing that the registered manager and staff team act on advice and make positive changes to improve practice.

The registered manager has developed positive working relationships with the wider networks. Reporting and information sharing with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and designated officer are appropriate and help to keep young people as safe as possible. Joint work continues with the community police, the virtual school and the looked after children's nurse. Sustaining these positive relationships helps to ensure that services are provided quickly when young people need support and help.

Information about this children's home

The home is a residential home for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a private company and can offer planned, emergency and respite placements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2016	Full	Good
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/11/2015	Full	Good
15/07/2014	Full	Adequate

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure challenge (under regulation 5(c)) to any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)
- Ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

- Ensure that the processes the registered person establishes to enable a review of the quality of care to take place should allow for a report to be generated at least once every six months. The generated report should be sent to Ofsted and the placing authority of all children in the home who are looked after children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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