

SC387684

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six children. The home's statement of purpose states that care is provided for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home offers planned, emergency and respite placements.

The home is owned by a company which provides residential provision throughout England.

There is currently no registered manager as the previous registered manager was dismissed.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. We last visited this setting on 8 February 2021, for a monitoring visit inspection. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 30 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2019	Full	Good
26/11/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Good
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Poor matching and impact risk assessments have meant that some children have had negative experiences living at the home. Some children report that they are afraid of other children's behaviour when it escalates. However, despite this, some children make good progress from their starting point. This includes successful rehabilitation back into the care of their families.

The lack of clear and consistent boundaries has an impact on some children's ability to self-regulate. However, in recent months, staff have worked hard to build and maintain strong relationships with children.

Some children's experiences at the home, as well as their negative impact on each other, have led to their disengagement from education. However, staff promote and support children to attend education. Some children consistently attend education and are on track for positive outcomes.

Children's outcomes have had an impact by the high turnover of staff. For example, there was a negative impact on one child who had developed trusting relationships with three members of staff who left their employment. This has had a negative impact on the child's behaviour and well-being.

Parents are warmly welcomed into the home, and staff support and arrange for children to spend time with their family when it is safe to do so.

Children generally live healthy lifestyles. Children are supported to take their medication and attend health appointments. Staff ensure that children have access to specialist advice and support. Children who have been adversely affected by significant events in the home are encouraged to make use of the specialist therapy available to them. One parent reported to the inspector that their child found this to be useful and helped the child to make sense of events.

Children know how to complain. They know and understand what has happened as a result of their complaint. Children say that they can tell staff if they are unhappy. A child was supported by staff to identify a talent in table tennis, and staff helped him to pursue this talent by ensuring that he has the facilities to train and practise, even during periods of national lockdown. The home has been recently redecorated, and children were involved in choosing some of the decorative items.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager was dismissed following the monitoring visit to the home in February 2021 and the outcome of investigations in relation to safeguarding

allegations. However, information relating to the allegation was not shared with a core professional that the child trusted. Therefore, the child did not receive appropriate support from the trusted professional.

A further allegation was not explored fully. The designated officer said, 'I found one manager reluctant to follow my advice, especially when asked to continue with the investigation.' This does not help keep children safe. However, the provider has now identified this shortfall and taken action to reinvestigate the allegation.

In recent months, behaviour and risk management plans have begun showing improvement. However, not all risk assessments and behaviour management plans clearly set out how to support children. Behaviour plans, risk management plans and impact risk assessments do not consider the impact of children's behaviours on others in the home. For example, although two children report that they feel safe living in the home, they have not always felt comfortable due to the dynamics with other children. Consequently, there have been missed opportunities to strategically tackle issues.

Waking night staff have been in place since the monitoring visit in February 2021. However, during a recent incident, children were able to distract staff while they snuck a non-resident child into the home to stay overnight. This does not demonstrate effective staff vigilance and potentially places children at risk. The provider has since reviewed this incident with staff and taken learning for this incident.

Ofsted is notified of serious incidents that occur at the home. However, the quality of the notifications is variable. Notifications do not always contain full and accurate information about what has taken place or what actions staff have taken to reduce risks.

Children who go missing from the home experience a well-coordinated response, and there is a clear plan of action in place to safeguard them. Staff keep in touch with children while they are missing and make efforts to locate them to ensure their prompt return home.

The laundry room does not have a fire blanket or fire extinguisher. However, the provider took action to address this shortfall during the inspection.

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

It has been a challenging time at the home due to the dismissal of the registered manager and the departure of several staff members. The home has been managed by a senior manager since February 2021. The provider has struggled to recruit staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, staff and children have tested positive for COVID-19, which has had an impact on their mental health and well-being. The culmination of these factors has had an impact on the management transition, and the registered manager post is currently vacant.

For the period from September 2020 to January 2021, staff reported that they felt unsupported and did not benefit from good development opportunities. Staff supervision during this time was inconsistent, and team meetings did not include staff views and evidence of their engagement. This resulted in a closed culture and demotivated staff team.

However, staff now report that they feel better supported. They are supported to understand their role and how best to support children and each other. Staff supervision is improving in quality and frequency. Team meetings are focused on making improvements in the quality of care provided to children. However, team meetings are not providing staff with group supervision and still do not demonstrate good enough engagement of staff as outlined in the home's statement of purpose.

Leaders and managers continue to struggle recruiting suitable staff to work at the home. They are starting to revisit their recruitment action plans after a concerted effort to stabilise the service. The management structure has strengthened due to the recruitment of a deputy manager. However, staff turnover generally remains high. This requirement remains unmet from the full inspection in August 2019.

Staff induction records are not always accurate, and some records are incomplete. Children's feedback forms are sometimes completed by staff, and these are not signed by staff or do not evidence that children agree with what has been written. This does not help leaders and managers to maintain oversight of the strategic development of the service. However, staff training has improved since the monitoring visit in February 2021. Furthermore, staff have completed core safeguarding training and training specific to the needs of the children in their care.

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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e))	1 September 2021
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;	1 September 2021

manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all records relating to children are an accurate and full record of their day-to-day lives.	1 September 2021
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.	1 September 2021

If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))	
A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	1 September 2021
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that individual and group supervision take place as stated in the homes' statement of purpose.	1 September 2021

Recommendation

- The Registered person should ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislations, particularly in relation to ensuring a fire extinguisher fire blanket is available in the laundry room. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC387684

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

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

Responsible individual: James Barlow

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jayshree Pillay, Social Care Inspector

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