

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 home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home offers planned, emergency and respite placements.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 December 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

Date of last inspection: 1 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are safe and their well-being is promoted by staff and managers who are attuned to meeting their needs.
- Young people make good progress in their behaviour from challenging starting points.

- Young people build secure and stable relationships with adults in the home who help to raise their self-awareness.
- Young people make good progress in their education.
- Young people feel heard and valued by the staff and managers.
- Staff and managers support the young people in line with the ethos of the home's statement of purpose.
- Staff state that they are well supported to carry out their duties and they enjoy working with the young people.
- Young people say that the home is homely.
- Young people benefit from good partnership working between the home and other professionals as well as with family members.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Good
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/11/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placement for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- Medicines must be administered in line with medically approved protocol. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving the home both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)
- The regulation 45 report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people in the home receive good care from the staff and managers who develop positive relationships with them. Young people's strengths and needs are well understood by the staff who are committed to supporting them to achieve positive outcomes. One young person said, 'I've proper changed because of this placement.' She no longer goes missing and has good relationships with the other young people and the adults in the home. Another young person said, 'It's pretty good here, it's really homely.' Another young person said that there was nothing she wanted to change about the home.

Young people make good progress from their challenging starting points. For example, a young person has had a reduction in incidents of physical aggression to a point where he is able to have longer contact with his family.

An independent reviewing officer stated that the home has been 'an excellent provision' for her young person who has 'settled well and responded to the positive boundaries in place'. Another independent reviewing officer, who has known his young person for several years, stated that the home 'appears to be meeting the young person's needs and has been rather proactive in getting her involved in local activities'. He further stated that the young person's key worker and the manager were 'able to give a good update on the young person' at the children looked after's review even though the young person had not been in placement for long.

Young people are in good health and staff ensure that any health concerns are addressed. Where a young person needs extra support to manage his health, the home provides the necessary support. A young person who is pregnant receives ample support to manage the various stages of her pregnancy. Another young person has had her medication decreased due to the progress she has made through consistently healthy meals. A young person who is prescribed several medications has been educated on his medications and their impact on him. Consequently, the young person has developed a heightened awareness about his needs and his role in managing them.

Young people receive appropriate levels of support in relation to their emotional well-being. For example, in key-working sessions, young people are able to talk about their feelings when they become upset, which has helped lead to a reduction in disruptive outbursts. Young people benefit from staff and managers who work closely with the young people's therapist, by sharing strategies to support young people's emotional well-being. In addition, young people have access to specialist services such as child and adolescent mental health services when necessary.

All of the four young people who currently live in the home are fully engaged in education. They attend school or alternative provision regularly and make good progress. For example, a young person who has complex emotional needs is now on a path to attending a mainstream school full-time. The young person 'is enjoying the

school experience for the first time and is developing a much more positive attitude', according to a school professional. Another young person has settled well at her new school. Another young person has 'come on in leaps and bounds' since being placed at the home, as stated by the headteacher. A children looked after's education adviser from the virtual school said that she has 'always been impressed with the level of communication from staff and managers'. She further stated that that 'the cooperation from the home' in supporting the young people's learning has been 'one of the best' of the many homes she has worked with. Where the young person has an education, health and care plan, there is evidence of appropriate support being provided to the young person in line with the plan.

Young people attend and contribute to residents' meetings in which they voice their thoughts on matters that directly concern them. For example, young people choose their activities and meals. Consequently, young people feel heard and valued. A young person said, 'When we all sit together, we talk about our feelings, menus, activities, and they listen to me.' The young person appreciates the quality of food in the home, stating, 'It's not Tesco value.'

The acting manager ensures that a good admission planning process is in place. This includes impact analysis, meeting with the young people and partner agencies and arranging visits to the home before any young person is admitted. However, two placement referrals since the last inspection were ineffectively managed. Impact assessments were completed on the young people but the risks were not robustly assessed. Some of the standard strategies set out to mitigate the risks did not adequately support the young people in relation to their highly aggressive behaviour, frequently going missing and serious self-harming behaviour. This resulted in ineffective behaviour management and poor placement outcomes for the young people.

A young person who left the home for an independent living accommodation experienced good progress leading up to her departure and seemed to be sufficiently prepared for independent living. However, she relapsed into self-harming after her move and was subsequently hospitalised for her mental health. Staff and managers worked diligently to support the young person during her difficulties. Still, there is room for improvement in working more closely with the placing authority to ensure that adequate service provisions are in place for the young person when they transition from the home into independent living.

Young people know how to complain. The home has a clear, child-focused complaints policy. The children's guide includes young people's rights and the agencies they may contact, such as the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Young people's complaints are handled in line with the appropriate procedures. Their concerns are properly investigated with a clear outcome and reflect a child-centred approach to resolving complaints.

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

Young people receive good help and protection from the staff and managers, who are attuned to their vulnerabilities. Young people state that they feel 'safe' in the home and

are able to identify adults they can talk to about any concerns. Risk factors associated with physical health, child sexual exploitation, self-harming, offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, going missing and radicalisation are assessed and managed by the staff and managers. Each young person has a detailed risk assessment in place with specific actions to mitigate the identified risks. Staff and managers conduct room searches, while respecting the young person's dignity, and engage the young person in key-working sessions to further assess their vulnerability and educate them about the identified risks. Risk assessments are updated and there is evidence of the manager's review of the young people's assessments. Behaviour support plans are in place for the young people that identify strategies to manage challenging behaviour.

When young people go missing from the home, staff consistently follow agreed procedures. Return home interviews routinely take place, and any emerging factors that may increase the young person's vulnerability are assessed. Strategy meetings are convened to help manage the risks. A police constable from the borough's missing persons and child sexual exploitation unit said that their overall experience of the home is 'extremely positive'. He stated, 'We have nothing but praise for the staff and the way that the home is run. We strongly feel that the staff engage the young people well. We have seen a really positive effect on the reduction in missing[-from-care] episodes and risk-taking behaviour of the children since they have been placed at the home from their previous placements.'

A social work professional stated that his young person, who would regularly go missing, no longer does. The young person has not had a missing-from-care incident since the end of June. Another young person has not gone missing since being placed in the home over a year ago.

Investigations into serious incidents or allegations of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies and are handled robustly in line with the statutory guidance. The home works in partnership with the local authority designated officer.

The use of restraint is low. The systems in place for recording restraints and sanctions are appropriate. Young people's views are recorded, and there is evidence of managers' review of the incidents.

Medication is generally organised safely. Staff and managers make sure that they keep young people's medication under review and report any effects on their well-being. However, two medication errors occurred, with no ill effect on the young people.

The location risk assessment is fit for purpose. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and meets the requirements of relevant legislation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has been without a registered manager since November 2017. The provider appointed the deputy manager as the acting manager. The acting manager is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted. The acting manager ensures that the home is properly staffed and that safe recruitment is in place.

Staff receive regular supervision that is focused on meeting the young people's needs and receive feedback on their practice. The acting manager utilises supervision to challenge gaps in practice and develop staff. Staff members state that they find supervision helpful. Newly appointed staff benefit from a meaningful induction programme. A staff member who has been working at the home for several months stated that her 'confidence has grown' because of the support and encouragement she receives from the manager and the team. She further stated, 'I love being here, being with the children.' A staff member who has been working at the home for several years stated that they are a 'family unit'.

The workforce development plan is comprehensive, and the training plan covers the necessary areas for staff's learning. Staff state that they find the training they have received helpful in their practice.

The acting manager ensures that the staff team works in partnership with families and professionals to promote positive outcomes for the young people. A parent stated, 'The care is pretty outstanding' and praised the staff team's communication with her.

The acting manager is committed to promoting equality and ensuring that all young people's as well as staff's diversity is respected. The acting manager ensures that the home operates in line with the ethos of the statement of purpose.

The manager's assessment of the home's strengths and areas of improvement is thoughtful and considered. The manager utilises the independent visitor's reports that are, by and large, comprehensive. The manager is able to underpin her evaluation by the quality standards. However, there is room for improvement in the written report under regulation 45. In particular, the action plan for the next six months can be detailed with how the service would robustly evidence the impact it has on the young people's outcomes.

Staff take pride in their homely home and work diligently with the young people to promote a warm and family environment.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Lyndsey Sim

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Linda Kim-Newby, social care inspector

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