

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC387684
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Esland South Limited
Registered provider address	Riverside Business Centre, Unit 1& 5 Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper, DE56 0RN

Responsible individual	Lyndsey Sim
Registered manager	Sandra Furness
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC387684

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people say that they like living here and that they feel safe. They present as calm, happy and confident, and say they know there is support here for them.
- Young people are making progress from their starting points. Three young people sat GCSE examinations this summer in mathematics and English. Young people are engaging with staff, and the results have been a decrease in difficult behaviours and an increase in talking and negotiating to make changes.
- Staff use key work sessions and informal sessions regularly, which are helping young people to think about, regulate and change their behaviour.
- New placement plan books encourage young people to share their views, wishes and feelings. This positive initiative encourages young people to participate in their care and behaviour management planning and keeps them in the centre of practice.
- Working in partnership with other agencies, professionals and families is a strength of this home.
- The home is evolving during a period of change, with a new manager and various staff changes and moves. Leaders and managers have responded to this change positively and are working hard to embed new and consistent practice.
- Problems of organisation and communication within the staff team, while managing a complex situation, led to some missed appointments in the care planning process.
- There are some shortfalls in providing a consistent induction during a time of change in the staff team. This has, at times, led to members of the staff team responding outside the home's own procedures.
- Staff show good knowledge of safeguarding practice. Refresher training on local protocols would support staff to feel confident in providing challenge to placing authorities, such as their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to strategy meetings and return from missing interviews.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, with particular reference to supporting young people to attend appointments, the registered provider must ensure that staff help each child to: (2)(a) (iii) take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purposes of meeting the child's health and well-being needs.	30 July 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in training and development of staff in the home. This is in relation to ensuring proper induction within the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. This is in relation to understanding local safeguarding procedures and in relation to ensuring that staff follow the home's procedures when involving the police in managing young people's behaviour. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is a residential home for up to four children and young people with emotional and 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
17 March 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25 November 2015	Full	Good
15 July 2014	Full	Adequate
3 June 2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people share positive and trusting relationships with staff at this home. Through observations, it became evident that young people can talk, play, be encouraged to study and have open discussions with staff. Young people spend time in the home interacting with staff and with one another. For example, all the young people sat at the table to eat lunch together. They continued chatting, and playing cards and games throughout the afternoon. Young people are making good or steady progress from their starting points. For example, three young people sat exams this summer in GCSE mathematics and English. This is a great achievement for some young people who had previously been out of formal education for two years. Another young person is undertaking charitable work with the support of staff. For others, small but significant progress includes regulating and improving behaviours or staying out of trouble with the police. Care planning is specific to young people and the staff team know them well. The company has introduced new placement plan booklets. These are in their infancy and no completed versions are yet available for review. The initiative places the focus on the young person as the centre of planning. Young people are encouraged to share their views, wishes and feelings. They become involved in thinking about risks, behaviours and care planning and can input what they feel is important to them. One young person who recently moved into the home told me that he liked his room and was keen to show me. His social worker felt the home was 'supportive', had made him 'feel at ease' and had given the young person 'confidence'. Another social worker says, 'They are a good organisation, basic plans are in place, the environment is welcoming and they set out expectations well.' Not all transitions have been so effective and this has shown up some inconsistencies within the staff team. Where planning has not worked so well, the registered manager is aware and is reflective on where improvements are needed. On occasion, the lack of planning and communication led to failed appointments for one young person, which is not acceptable. Staff promote young people's individual needs, identities and backgrounds. Regular themed nights take place in the home, the most recent one being 'Bollywood'. Young people are encouraged to get involved in decorating the home and	

preparing food for the evening. Family and friends are included in such events. Young people have good access to primary health services to meet basic health needs. Staff ensure prompt registration with local health providers. Preventative health appointments are encouraged, as well as sexual health appointments for advice or routine checks. The home shares good relationships with outside agencies, such as the youth offending service and children and adolescent mental health services, to support emotional and behavioural needs. The company also offers quick access to psychological assessments and sessions through an agency called Future Minds. These services help to support young people during transition and pending the establishment of local services.

Young people also engage in key work sessions and informal sessions with their key workers. These sessions address day-to-day issues, such as regulating and changing behaviours, relationships, self-esteem and many other topics. This helps young people to consider other perspectives, to build trust and to talk about issues worrying them. One parent says, 'I do feel confident that they are using good techniques. I can hear other people's views and points in conversations with my child.'

Young people make good progress in education. All young people are on roll at a school or pupil referral unit. If necessary, home tuition is sourced as part of a plan back into education. Feedback from tutors is positive and attendance is good. Currently young people are on exam leave but a tutor remains available until the end of the school term, supporting young people to attend open days or make applications for college courses starting in September 2016. One school says that they work well with the home and receive good challenge from staff on behalf of pupils. The head says, 'they talk "a parent" and I talk "a school".'

Support is available for young people to learn skills in preparation for living independently. One young person said he is beginning to manage a budget, preparing menus, going shopping and cooking his own meals. He feels he can manage this. Young people also have help to do their own laundry and keep their rooms tidy. Learning life skills helps prepare young people for leaving care and helps them to feel a sense of achievement and self-worth.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home's manager completes good risk assessments of young people, starting prior to placement with impact risk assessments that consider all young people already placed in the home.	

Two recent admissions, accepted closely together, did not work well. The manager recognised that they could not meet these young people's needs or keep them safe, and alternative plans were put in place. The home identified the issues early on, and managed these risks until alternative plans could be made. There was a management review of the processes to identify what did not work well. This experience has helped to inform future practice.

Another planned referral showed a very positive impact risk assessment and made a good transition into the home. Good risk assessments have allowed the manager to plan resources, negotiate staffing ratios and ensure that young people are kept as safe as possible.

Young people say that they feel safe. Trusting relationships help young people to talk about issues if they are worried. Young people are routinely being involved in contributing to their care planning and identifying risky behaviours. This helps young people to understand what is happening and what staff may be concerned about.

Robust staff recruitment processes are in place, which protect young people from having exposure to unsafe people working in their home. The induction programme is not yet sufficiently robust to ensure that new staff members feel confident in all areas of behaviour management.

The manager uses team meetings to encourage and facilitate staff discussions on practice. An incident where the police were called inappropriately by staff has been discussed and used as a reflective training session. Discussions with the staff team and good relationships with the local police ensure that young people are not criminalised in such circumstances.

Staff training focuses on key areas of protection, such as child sexual exploitation and risks of radicalisation, as well as safeguarding processes and local protocols. The local authority designated officer attended a recent team meeting as a training and liaison exercise. There is a plan to invite the local children's safeguarding board to a team meeting to ensure that staff have up-to-date information and feel confident to challenge placing authorities where they do not fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities.

Staff understand the risks for young people when they are missing from home. They feel confident about processes for reporting young people missing and take positive steps to keep in touch with them when they are absent. These include, for example, regular phone calls and text messages, encouraging them to stay safe, offering to collect them or advising where they can receive care or help if needed. The manager and staff routinely request an independent person to complete a return home interview. Where missing is escalating into a pattern, meetings are requested to discuss strategies to keep young people safe and to provide a multi-

agency response. Despite this, of the 48 missing from care episodes recorded, only 14 return home interviews were conducted by placing authorities.

Restraint is rarely used in this home. The formation of positive relationships reduces the likelihood of physical interventions. There are appropriate recordings of incidents, and only one has occurred since the last inspection. Young people say that sanctions are fair and all knew how to complain if they needed to.

There have been two allegations made against staff since the last inspection. Appropriate notifications and referrals to deal with these issues occurred. Regular updates and discussions took place to ensure the safeguarding of young people. One allegation was found to be false as the member of staff accused had not been at the home at the time. The other incident was not progressed by the designated officer, but leaders and managers took action under disciplinary procedures to ensure that a clear message was given.

The home environment is clean and well maintained. There is adequate recreational and quiet space for young people. The young people have been involved in helping staff do the garden, which is a pleasant place to sit and relax. Safety equipment is in place and there is evidence of regular and compliant checks and fire drills. A suitable location risk assessment identifies local risks well and identifies community resources.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is competent and is growing in experience and confidence. She is currently working towards her level 5 diploma and is aware of the timeframe within which this must be completed. Leaders and managers have responded to the one recommendation made at the last inspection, in relation to the content and focus of the review of the quality of care provided at the home. No reviews have been due since the last inspection. However, the next review will focus on key areas for development. External monitoring of the home is good. An independent visitor regularly visits and seeks feedback from young people, parents and professionals. Recommendations are acted upon promptly to improve services. Staff say that they feel supported with regular supervision, team meetings and training. A strength of the home has been the training programme. Training is targeted specifically to staff needs. For example, the new seniors have completed	

quality standards, radicalisation and supervision training. Regular ongoing training as part of a training matrix is available and new staff undertake mandatory training in key areas, including safeguarding, first aid, medication and physical intervention training.

There have been a number of changes within the staff team, with 10 new staff members starting over the last seven months and six leaving. The deputy manager left to manage another setting and three existing staff members moved into senior positions to support the manager. These changes, alongside the influx of new staff, created some shortfalls. Some staff felt that the induction programme for new staff was not sufficiently robust to ensure that they felt confident to do their jobs.

The result has been some inappropriate responses to behaviour management. No young people have been put at risk because of this, as leaders and managers have acted quickly to ensure that guidance and support are in place.

The staff team has been through a process of change, and this is embedding in their practice. The leadership and management are strong. They have responded to issues as they have arisen and are aware of their weaknesses.

Despite the shortfalls, young people continue to make good progress. Leaders and managers understand the care plans for young people. Where they do not feel they can support complex needs they have involved placing authorities and supported transitions to more suitable provision.

There is good evidence that leaders and staff work proactively with others to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. Feedback from professionals and parents was positive. One professional says, 'We have generally good relationships with the unit. They have been very proactive, send information through, attend strategy meetings or request them.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 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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