

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	24/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC387684
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Esland South Limited
Registered person 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	24/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Adequate
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:

- The new Registered Manager is experienced, motivated and is leading the staff team to make positive changes in practice.
- Young people respond to clear and consistent boundaries. Positive use of restorative practice and behaviour management plans has helped to improve challenging behaviours.
- The Registered Manager encourages careful matching, taking into account as a priority the impact new admissions may have on existing residents.
- Young people feel safe at this home and report that staff listen to them and take action on their views.
- The staff team are experienced, committed and work well together as a team. New staff report feeling supported and gelling well with young people.
- Good assessments of young people's needs results in high staff ratios, which has led to a significant reduction in young people going missing.
- The home can quickly access short-term therapeutic work for young people through their organisational services.
- Young people gain staff support to maintain positive relationships with people who are important to them.
- Young people's views and inclusion in planning their futures is developing. Their involvement in day-to-day issues in the home such as recruitment and staff appraisal is another area for development.
- Staff feel well supported with supervisions. There are not consistent appraisals of staff practice completed to review development and address practice issues.

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 young people are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.11)

- The home should work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.6)

- Ensure staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. As part of the performance management process, poor performance should be addressed by a timely plan to bring about improvement. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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
15/07/2014	Full	Adequate
03/06/2014	Full	Inadequate
20/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
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. Young people demonstrate trusting and secure relationships with staff. The new Registered Manager has implemented clear structure and boundaries and the young people are responding to this after a period of adjustment. The staff team consistently manages disruptive and difficult behaviours. Staff are respectful of young people's individual identities, needs and backgrounds and promote these well. For example, staff arranged a Caribbean night where they invited family and friends to sample their Caribbean food. Staff also support personal connections to family and friends. Staff have travelled very long distances to promote family contact at times and this has assisted young people to keep in touch with family and friends. There is evidence of young people engaging in complex decisions about their lives and care plans. Examples of this are attendance at review meetings and one young person self-referring to specialist services. Case files do not reflect the work undertaken in this area and there is not routine recording of young people's views on files. Staff support young people to talk about difficult feelings within key work sessions. Staff act on complaints raised and this has helped improve the service. For example, the manager is arranging an advocate to visit regularly. If the manager does not grant a young person's request, explanations help them to understand this process and they are aware how to complain. Young people access primary health services to ensure they stay healthy. Separate files maintained by staff ensure accurate recording of health needs and appointments. The organisation accesses a service for young people called 'Future Minds', which offers a psychological assessment and short-term intervention if required. This service allows young people an opportunity to talk through difficult issues and ask questions. Staff work hard to engage young people to attend education. All young people living here are on role at a school or college. Young people attend a mix of educational provision, including some days in college and some home tuition time at the home. Staff promote education; however, engagement is slow due to	

complexity of need.

Young people make progress from their starting points. This is a slow process for some due to complex needs and situations. One young person, who was previously out of education for a long time, now attends college twice a week and home tuition on other days.

There is evidence of good networking between staff and professionals involved in the young people's care to ensure care planning is progressed and communication is effective. One social worker reports, 'I receive regular reports from them and incidents are told in a timely fashion.'

Choices for young people are evident. One young person was choosing paint colours and the decorator was present during the inspection. Young people also help to choose furniture and fittings and say they can make requests about food shopping. Young people say they know how to complain and the children's guide provides them with numbers where they can contact advocates and Ofsted if they are not happy.

Independent living skills are encouraged and supported by staff. Young people gain basic skills by planning and cooking meals, tidying their own rooms, helping with washing-up and doing their own laundry, all with support to manage such tasks. This encourages a positive sense of self-worth.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The children's home provides help and protection that meet the requirements for good. Young people live in a safe environment and are increasingly safe due to the actions of staff, for example going out to look for them if they are missing. There is regular and effective contact with placing authority social workers and staff strongly advocate for what they feel is in a young person's best interests. Clear risk assessments determine what reasonable risk is and behaviour management plans offer strategies to manage behaviour. One young person does not particularly like living at the home, however this is more to do with their care plan than the care provided by the home. Staff are aware of child sexual exploitation, gang association and risks about going	

missing from home. Protocols when young people go missing are clear and staff follow these. Staff talk to young people when they return to the home and ensure they feel welcomed back. This helps understand why the young person went missing. The home routinely requests that placing authorities offer independent return home interviews. On a possible 17 incidents of young people going missing, placing authorities only offered an independent interview once. The Registered Manager challenges this on behalf of young people and ensures access to an advocate.

Staff are aware of young people's individual needs and how this affects how they respond within the home. Young people receive appropriate help to support complex problems, such as child and adolescent mental health services, 'Future Minds' (psychological service) and drug and alcohol services.

The Registered Manager has developed professional networks within the local community to support keeping young people safe. For example inviting the neighbourhood police team to meet young people. The manager has effective links with the local children's safeguarding board and the designated officer and they advise that the management take appropriate steps to support young people to be safe.

Staff encourage positive behaviours with rewards and praise. Restraint is rarely used, but when it has been, it has been appropriate and detailed records are kept. The home encourages restorative justice where possible, which helps young people understand consequences and avoids criminalising behaviours.

Staff respect young people's privacy within the home, for example, staff knock on doors prior to entering. Where concerns require room searches, these take place sensitively and clear recordings and reviews are evident. This ensures everyone's safety within the home.

Young people live in a homely environment. The physical environment has improved significantly, with maintenance repairs being quickly addressed, new windows fitted and decorating undertaken.

Robust staff recruitment processes are in place. This protects young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home.

Adequate precautions prevent the risk of fires. Safety equipment is in place and there is evidence of regular and compliant checks and fire drills.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers meet the requirements for good. A competent and suitable new manager runs the home. The manager is appropriately experienced and studying her level five diploma, due for completion within the required timescales. Since her appointment in July, positive changes are taking place. For example, clear boundaries are expected and consequences enforced, with the impact of reducing unwanted behaviours. The staff team has been unsettled for a period due to changes in management. The new Registered Manager is developing clear boundaries within the home and this is taking young people and some staff a while to adapt to. As this new ethos embeds itself, the young people are beginning to respond more appropriately and behaviour is calming in the home. The manager shows awareness of change and works hard to ensure the use of regular bank workers so that young people know the staff working in the home. Young people say they know all the staff who come in to work. The manager lives in the home most of the week, which young people say they like and this enables positive relationships and consistency of care. The manager has oversight of the care planning for young people and challenges this when it is not meeting a young person's need. For example, recent challenges to care planning has seen increases in maintaining personal links for young people. There is good external monitoring of the home. An independent visitor regularly visits the home and seeks feedback from young people, professionals and parents. These reports, allow for an objective view on the progress made or any improvements needed. The manager has recently completed a thorough quality of care review. This is helping her to know the service and improve in areas requiring development. There is a management development plan to improve the service further and ensure effective succession plans for the future. Leaders and managers keep young people's progress under review and challenge placing authorities where progress is poor. They have made some difficult decisions to move young people on where they did not feel able to meet their needs. Although the manager is new to post, this is already beginning to demonstrate the positive impact that living at the home has had on individual young people.	

Case records are accurate and reflect the work taking place with young people. The staff team work well together despite new members joining. The cohesion of the new manager and the drive to improve is helping this. Files show clear progress for young people. This demonstrates the hard work undertaken by the manager and staff team.

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 is good. One social worker says, 'I feel that they are definitely helping X as much as he allows himself to be helped'.

Staff state they receive regular supervision and feel supported to do their jobs confidently. Training and development of staff is a priority for leaders and managers. The staff report good training opportunities and a training matrix monitors essential training and dates when this is completed. Staff feel confident in their work as a result.

Appraisals are underway. This manager is catching up on essential processes that need updating. The manager plans to involve young people in both the appraisal and recruitment process to improve the service further.

There is an experienced staff team working at this home. Staff speak very highly of the new manager and feel that young people are responding to the changes within the home. The Registered Manager has made impressive progress over a short time in post and practice is improving.

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 looked after children 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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