

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	25/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC433430
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Esland North Limited
Registered person address	Esland North Ltd, Butt Dyke House, 33 Park Row, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 6EE

Responsible individual	Lyndsey Sim
Registered manager	Vacant Post
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths

Inspection date	25/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC433430

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Young people have experienced some inconsistency in their care as a result of the use of relief and agency staff. This has been due to high levels of sickness and some staff leaving the service. Although remaining and new staff work hard to minimise the impact of this on young people, it has made it difficult for them to make and sustain trusting relationships with those who care for them. This has had an impact on young people's sense of stability and security in the home.
- On occasion, there is not a sufficient number of experienced staff on duty to respond flexibly to the complex needs of young people or to unexpected events which occur in the home.
- Recording in relation to a serious safeguarding matter lacked detail and clarity. This contravenes the home's safeguarding procedures. It has the potential to impair investigations and prevents robust management monitoring of safeguarding practices.
- Some parents and professionals express dissatisfaction with the level and consistency of communication they have with staff.

The children's home strengths

- A new management team has already identified areas of weakness and is implementing plans to swiftly address the shortfalls identified.
- Recruitment has been successful. New and remaining staff are being trained and developed. The new manager leads by example. She and a newly created staff team are enthusiastic and committed to improving the life experiences of young people.
- Young people have access to and participate in activities that are varied and tailored to their individual preferences.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must: 2(b) ensure that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others, with particular reference to young people having the opportunity to build positive relationships with a consistent staff team	21/10/2015
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: 2(a)(vii) ensure that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection procedures, with particular reference to the recording of safeguarding issues	21/10/2015
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: 2(d) ensure the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child 2(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.	21/10/2015

Recommendations

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

- The registered person is to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, with particular reference to sharing information with other professionals and parents without delay. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 52, paragraph 10.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- This children's home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The main house can accommodate two young people and the cottage annex on the other side of the driveway can accommodate one.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
15/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
13/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
09/01/2014	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Young people's experiences and progress are variable. Staffing shortages, resulting in the use of relief and agency staff have had an impact on young people's sense of stability and security in the home and on the level of progress they make. A social worker said in respect of a young person: 'The key for him is a stable staff team and consistency of care. He has not had this and it has had a negative impact on him.' A parent said: 'I do not feel my son has moved on much.' The new manager has taken prompt action to address this issue by recruiting new staff. Once the new staff team is fully established, this will give young people an improved opportunity to experience the consistency, stability and security that they need and deserve. This is work in progress. Young people do make progress in some aspects of their lives. Their health needs are promoted and met. One young person, who prior to living in this home, refused to engage with any health appointments, now attends all core health appointments. This, as well as a healthy balanced diet, physical activity and encouragement and support to improve self-care skills has resulted in the young person being healthier and happier. The young person has started to take pride in his appearance, demonstrating improved self-esteem and confidence. The educational progress young people make is limited. For some young people, who have been out of education for significant periods of time, delays in special educational need assessments being updated have prevented the correct bespoke full-time packages of registered education being provided for them. The new manager has, however, been proactive in coordinating alternative packages of education for young people who are unable to attend mainstream schools. These consist of home tutors, outdoor education and in some cases, work experience, with an aim of maximising educational achievement on an interim basis. Young people have access to varied and exciting activities tailored to their individual choices and preferences in the local community. Some attend cadets, go to local skate parks and youth clubs. Others enjoy trips to the cinema, doing a variety of outdoor activities and going on trips to theme parks. A link with a local business has also enabled a young person to participate in work experience. The participation in leisure and community activities enables young people to feel an integral part of their community. It provides them with an opportunity to have fun, socialise and stay healthy. As a result they develop socially and this helps raise their self-esteem.	

Young people's views are central to the running of the home. In weekly meetings young people have the opportunity to choose what food they would like and what activities they want to do. The meetings are also used to help young people reflect on the progress they have made each week and what they would like to achieve in the coming week. This and monthly reviews of placement plans in consultation with young people, helps young people to feel listened to and valued. It also helps to motivate young people to work towards the goals they have been involved in setting.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Outstanding maintenance issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Young people are involved in choosing the furnishing and décor of the home. A young person who recently came to live in the home said: 'Staff have made me feel really welcome and they are listening to me about the changes I want to make to the house.' Such involvement helps young people to develop a sense of pride in the environment they have created and it makes it feel more like a family home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The home is a physically safe environment. Social workers and parents feel that young people are safe living in this home. For some young people, instances of risk-taking behaviour reduce and in some cases stop. A social worker said: 'The young person is safe, there have been no incidents of self-harm and he is no longer frequently running away.' Managers and leaders have taken action following a serious safeguarding concern which was raised in April 2015: there was a delay of approximately five hours in this being reported to the police. Lessons have been learnt and through debriefs, staff have been re-familiarised with the home's safeguarding and reporting policies. A shortfall remains unaddressed, however, in respect of the recording of this safeguarding incident. There are gaps in the daily logs and they lack clarity in respect of what specifically happened. This contravenes the home's safeguarding procedures. While this recording shortfall did not have an impact on the safety of young people in this instance, poor recording has the potential to jeopardise safeguarding investigations. It also prevents the manager from robustly monitoring safeguarding practices in the home. Bullying is not tolerated in this home. Proactive enforcement of the home's anti-bullying policy and young people entering into written agreements in respect of this helps to promote an environment of respect. This provides young people with an improved sense of safety.	

Young people are helped and protected as a result of detailed risk assessments being implemented and regularly reviewed by staff. Staff engage young people in individual sessions in response to issues which arise. For some young people, this has helped reduce risk-taking behaviour, in particular, in relation to self-harm and going missing.

As a result of the location of the home and individualised missing from care risk assessments and plans being implemented by staff, incidents of missing are well managed. For some young people, from their starting points, incidents reduce. As a result of prompt reporting and good relationships with the police, on the occasions when young people have gone missing, they have been quickly located and welcomed back into the home.

Proactive behaviour management strategies and systems have had a positive impact on young people. Young people are motivated by the financial rewards they earn in return for reaching their daily behaviour targets. Despite some young people continuing to engage in verbally and physically aggressive behaviour, some improvement is evident. A parent commented that her son was 'calmer' and a social worker said: 'There have been improvements since the new manager came. He has better structure and routine and she is not allowing him to take control.'

Physical intervention is used as a very last resort and despite some young people displaying very challenging behaviours, on all occasions, the interventions have been of a very minor nature and for very short durations. All incidents are appropriately recorded and analysed by the manager. This helps to ensure that practice remains effective in this area.

The company has a robust recruitment and selection procedure for new staff. They have been recruited and checked appropriately. This helps to ensure that only those people who are suitable to work with young people and do not pose a risk to their safety are employed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home has seen significant changes in the management structure since the last inspection. A new regional manager has been appointed and a new manager has been in post in the home since June 2015. The process is underway for her to become the registered manager of this home. She has a social work degree. She is on target to complete the required manager's qualification well within the required timescale set out in the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. She has experience of	

being a registered manager in another children's home. In addition, a new deputy manager has been appointed.

The shortage of permanent staff during this inspection period has had an impact on young people. It has prevented them having the consistency of care which their complex needs demand. A parent said: 'Some staff have been wonderful, but it is not consistent.' While there are always sufficient numbers of staff on duty to allocate the number of staff to each young person as outlined in their placement plans and risk assessments, this does not allow for flexibility should challenging or unexpected situations arise. In addition, it does not always take account of the experience of staff and the quality of relationships they have with young people. For example, there has been an occasion when a relief senior member of staff and two new staff, one of whom had not completed the home's specific behaviour management training programme, have been responsible for the care of two very complex young people who are receiving one-to-one and two-to one care. While there is no evidence to suggest that this jeopardised the safety of the young people on this occasion, insufficient staffing levels to meet the specific needs of young people in the home has the potential to do so.

Levels of communication between staff, social workers and parents have been inconsistent. A social worker said: 'Lines of communication have been poor; staff are not always quick to notify us of serious incidents.' Recent improvements in this area have, however, been noted. A parent said: 'I am kept up to date more than ever before but I did not get a call as I should have done this week.' Further development of practice in this area should improve the effectiveness of partnership working.

Feedback from professionals, parents and staff highlight that the new management team is having a positive impact on the home. A social worker said: 'There have been some improvements since the new manager came.' A parent said: 'Since the new manager came into post, I am feeling more hopeful.' A member of staff said: 'The new manager is very hands on. She leads by example. She is straight down the line, very clear, no confusion for staff and young people. I am learning every day.' The new manager is enthusiastic, passionate and aspirational. She has been quick to identify and take action to address shortfalls and staffing shortages. Vacancies have been filled and a newly revitalised and motivated team is developing.

All staff receive appropriate training. Newly appointed staff undergo a comprehensive induction programme which covers all mandatory areas of need as well as training in relation to specialist areas such as child sexual exploitation, self-harm and drugs and alcohol misuse. Staff also attend regular and productive staff meetings and they are regularly supervised by the new manager. All staff have individual development plans to maximise their potential in every aspect of their work. Practice in this area is good and provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care.

The home's statement of purpose has been updated. The document is detailed and provides parents and placing authorities with clear and accurate information about how young people will be helped and supported while living in the home. Young people are also provided with a guide so that they know what to expect when they come to live at the home.

The manager effectively monitors the progress young people make. Data in respect of young people's progress and patterns of behaviour is collected on a weekly basis. Patterns and trends are analysed. This highlights how well young people's needs are being met, what progress they are making, whether placement plans need to be amended and whether the placement remains appropriate to meet specific need. Monthly reviews undertaken directly with young people to reflect on the progress they are making are also effective. Such monitoring systems not only demonstrate to placing authorities and parents what impact living in the home is having on young people, they also enable young people themselves to see how much progress they are making.

Quality assurance monitoring of the home, both internally and externally are effective. The positive changes already made by the new manager alongside the further developments she has planned is indicative of a service which is striving to significantly improve the lives of young people.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015