

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/10/2016
Unique reference number	1225136
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Cambian Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	4th Floor, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment, London W6 9RU

Responsible individual	Michael Ore
Registered manager	Alexander Scott
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll

Inspection date	12/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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

1225136

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision requires improvement because:

- This is a newly registered service, so they are unable to demonstrate sustained progress for any of the young people.
- They have admitted complex young people with a diversity of needs and challenging behaviours. This has resulted in one disruption and a decline in outcomes for another young person.
- There is no arrangement in place for ensuring that timely independent return interviews are completed to try to prevent further missing episodes.
- There is no internal monitoring system in place. Consequently, there are six requirements and five recommendations arising from this inspection.
- This is a new staff team, the majority of whom are unqualified and with limited or no previous experience in residential childcare.
- The staff team is not benefiting from regular supervision to guide and support them.
- Records are not all maintained at a consistently good standard.

The children's home's strengths

- Young people's wishes and feelings are central to the day-to-day running of the home. All the young people are treated with dignity and respect and are treated as individuals in their own right.
- Constructive contact with family and friends is actively encouraged, supported and supervised if necessary, in line with any legal restrictions and personal preferences, thereby ensuring that it remains a positive experience for all concerned.
- Staff place the well-being of all the young people at the centre of their practice irrespective of the challenges they present.
- An appropriate balance has been established of positively reinforcing good behaviours and effort and the imposition of sanctions to try to improve negative behaviours.
- Staff de-escalate challenging behaviours effectively, without resorting to physical interventions.
- There is clear senior manager direction and good support for the new registered manager to help lead his team and continually improve the service provided.

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
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within five days of the use of a measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))</p>	01/12/2016
<p>32: Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person must recruit staff using procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety and, in particular, ensuring that full and satisfactory information is available about each individual in respect of all the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d), Schedule 2 (1))</p>	01/12/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. This includes the training of staff to supervise contact effectively, undertake appropriate adult duties at the police station and to understand fully the behaviour management strategies used at the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(c))</p>	31/03/2017
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience at the frequency prescribed in their own policy. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	01/12/2016

<p>45: Review of quality of care</p> <p>The registered manager must establish and maintain an effective system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided in the home and, in particular, the quality of recordings, including, but not exclusive to, staff recruitment files, restraint and missing from home records and the avoidance of third party information. (Regulation 45 (2)(a))</p>	<p>01/12/2016</p>
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>Reports following independent monitoring visits to the home should demonstrate consultations with parents and relatives, which inform their opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) and (4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>01/12/2016</p>

Recommendations

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

- To meet the health and well-being standard, staff should advocate and support children to access all the health services they require. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.8)
- To meet the education standard, the home must demonstrate that when a young person is not in education, training or employment they engage in suitable, constructive activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- To meet the care planning standard, the registered manager must demonstrate that the home only accepts a placement once they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the young person's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and after 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)
- To meet the protection of children standard, there must be a system in place to

ensure that a timely independent return interview takes place when a young person returns to the home after being missing from care. The home should then take account of this information when re-assessing risks and putting strategies in place to try to prevent a reoccurrence and thereby protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

- To meet the protection of children standard, missing from home records should be consistently maintained to a good standard and evaluated to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff to inform the internal review of the quality of care provided in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who may be experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>Since this home was registered on 17 May 2016, there have been variable outcomes for young people placed. The first admission was on 28 June 2016, so realistically it is very early days in respect of demonstrating sustained progress. One social worker said, 'The whole team is absolutely fabulous. I really like the holistic child-centred approach and I think we have just found the right place for this young person to thrive.'</p> <p>One young person initially enjoyed open and positive relationships with all the staff. Once established there was a month of engagement in the local mosque and with the youth offending team. However, he soon decided he wanted to move out of residential care and began detaching himself from all aspects of daily living, including education and positive activities. He also increased his time spent away from the home and on occasions would return under the influence of alcohol. He has been charged with criminal offences, is currently missing and has breached a court order. Staff have acted as appropriate adults at the police station, but have not had any training in this role to ensure that correct procedures are stringently adhered to and young people's legal rights are upheld.</p> <p>All the young people are treated with dignity and respect and treated as individuals in their own right. One young person, in particular, is thriving off the positive attention and activities afforded him at this home. Staff know their individual needs and unique preferences, actively listen to their experiences and feelings and spend quality time with them, so they feel valued and loved. Individual interests and talents are encouraged and supported, which increases self-esteem and builds confidence.</p> <p>Comments from young people include, 'It's a nice home and the staff are sound here, they listen to you and help you. I can talk to them all and feel involved in my plans. I have made friends in the local community', 'I like living here and I get on well with most of the staff. I love it when they take me out for a drive,' and, 'I really enjoy playing football, ice-skating and trampolining, going to see the animals at a pet shop and going to a youth club. One young person loves visiting a neighbour's horses. All the young people and staff on duty recently enjoyed a bowling competition together. All these opportunities strengthen their sense of belonging.</p> <p>The trusting relationships established have enabled staff to deliver some difficult messages to young people in a sensitive and compassionate manner, not least that they will not be returning home.</p>	

Good physical health and emotional well-being are actively promoted, with some positive outcomes. In particular, the frequency and severity of self-injurious behaviours have reduced in this nurturing environment. There have been no incidents for three weeks. This is because one young person is feeling more relaxed in this new placement and has now stated her wish to stay. However, one young person continues to refuse to attend a dental check.

Despite good advocacy by the staff, to date there has been limited educational progress overall. One young person was supported effectively to gain an apprenticeship, but then refused to attend. In contrast, one young person, who was not previously in education for four months, has now been attending a new school for two weeks, albeit on a reduced timescale. However, staff said he only engaged in 'Bits of education' when he was not attending school.

One young person is awaiting commencement of a one-week hair and beauty course. However, there are no plans in place following this and there is limited evidence of her engagement in constructive activities during the day. Rather, she will often sleep in, and remain in her night-clothes most of the day watching television. There is no evidence to demonstrate that young people who are not in education, training or employment are engaged in daily, suitably structured activities to sustain or regain their confidence.

Young people's wishes and feelings are central to the day-to-day running of the home. The child-friendly placement plans in place clearly demonstrate young people's input. As an example, they exercise a genuine choice in respect of contact with family and friends. Staff will travel long distances to ensure that young people benefit from regular contact with family and friends. They also supervise some arrangements to ensure that it remains a positive experience for all concerned. However, the staff are not specifically trained to undertake this role. This is particularly pertinent as one young person has a history of going missing during contact.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to enable all the young people to gain age- and ability-appropriate independence skills. Comments include, 'I keep my room tidy and I am trying hard to be more polite', 'I can cook meals and I do my own washing and ironing', 'I keep myself healthy with a good diet and I go to the gym', and, 'I like getting bargains from car boot sales.'

One young person was initially making good progress with his independence skills and in particular making wise budgeting choices. However, he quickly began to spend money on daily transport to be back with his previous negative associates.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>This service began operating less than three months ago, so realistically the main focus for staff has been to build positive relationships with all the young people and helping them to feel safe and relaxed. Consequently, one young person in particular is noticeably starting to feel comfortable enough to show a range of emotions in front of the staff. Comments from young people include, 'Everyone has been telling me how bad it is in care, but actually it's alright and I get to try lots of activities so I want to stay', and, 'I don't like to talk about my feelings but I do still get angry and cry and staff have told me that it's OK.'</p> <p>Staff are currently working hard to establish better routines for all the young people who previously experienced chaotic lifestyles. Already one young person is benefiting from improved sleep patterns, which in turn has a positive impact on his physical and emotional well-being and behaviours.</p> <p>Another young person was deliberately moved here away from his previous gang associations, which had resulted in a significant offending history, including violence and robbery. His expressed wish was, 'To make a fresh start away from those I got into trouble with.' Initially he made good progress, but the pull has proved too great and he is currently missing.</p> <p>There have been 10 missing from home incidents since this home opened, seven of which relate to the same young person. Moreover, they have increased in frequency and duration. He would also initially stay in contact with staff, insisting he was with friends and keeping safe. However, on this last occasion he has not, given the knowledge that he will be arrested. Good collaborative working with the police is firmly established and any intelligence is immediately shared to try to secure his safe return.</p> <p>There have been no independent return interviews undertaken. This is an important safeguarding process to reassess risks and consider strategies to prevent a reoccurrence. Missing from home records are not consistently maintained at a good standard and there is no monitoring system in place to address this.</p> <p>An emphasis on rewarding good behaviours and effort is having the desired effect on the behaviours of most of the young people. Comments include, 'I got this football for starting a new school', 'I have now earned enough stars to get my hair dyed', and, 'I can get extra pocket money for being good.' However, the majority, but not all, of the members of the staff team understand this positive approach, which suggests the need for further awareness training.</p> <p>One young person's risk-taking behaviours are reducing in this home and the staff</p>	

confirm good support from the police in this matter. Examples include no longer running off, climbing on the roof or sitting in the road. This means that he has not been restrained for a month.

This progress has been directly linked to regular, focused work on improving self-esteem and therefore him starting to care more about his own safety and well-being. One member of staff said, 'It's lovely to now see him smiling.'

Individual sessions, and agreements for staff to check social media sites, help to ensure that young people stay safe online and in the community.

Comments from young people include, 'I go to a local youth club. At first staff stayed with me, but now they wait outside', 'I have started being safe by staying with staff most of the time', 'I let staff look at my profile and I have shown staff some messages from a person I didn't know', and, 'I have stopped using my phone after I have settled to bed.'

Staff de-escalate challenging behaviours effectively without resorting to physical interventions. On the few occasions this has been deemed necessary, the least restrictive hold has been used for the shortest period of time. Records demonstrate that staff usually resort to guiding a young person away from an unsafe situation.

Young people are actively encouraged to reflect on their behaviours and comment on ways to try to prevent a reoccurrence. However, one recorded incident includes sensitive third-party information, thereby compromising confidentiality. Also, the restraint records do not demonstrate the required system for ensuring that the registered person has spoken to the young person about the measure within five days of the incident.

The management team openly acknowledges that this home was not the right placement for one young person who was admitted in September. This resulted in criminal damage, police involvement and a complaint from elderly neighbours who felt scared. Consequently, the placement became disrupted very quickly. The manager said, 'The placing authority was not honest on its referral form. This experience knocked the team's confidence but we have bounced back.' Lessons have been learned from this experience, not least ensuring that all required documentation is in place prior to each admission.

The impact risk assessments in place provide a good background and details of current risks of the individual referred, which are then balanced with the known risks and views of the other young people already in placement. However, they are not always completed prior to each admission. Also, the section for evaluating the skills of staff to meet these diverse and often competing needs is not completed. These documents are an essential part of care planning as a means of demonstrating a robust matching process and thereby to try to avoid disruptions.

This spacious home provides a good standard of accommodation with a good choice of communal rooms and size and shapes of bedrooms to meet a range of preferences. Young people like their bedrooms, which they have personalised and they are currently choosing their new decor. One young person said, 'My room is really big. I like to draw and paint and have made a name plaque for my bedroom door', and, 'I have hung up a mobile made for me by my little sister and I have just chosen my new wallpaper. I have gone for a city theme.'

All the required health and safety checks are undertaken at the required frequencies to ensure a safe environment for young people, staff and visitors.

However, staff recruitment files held in the home have not been carefully scrutinised to ensure that they meet the regulations and thereby demonstrate a robust recruitment and selection process. In particular, an extremely poor quality copy of a proof of identity and a recent photograph mean that the member of staff is unrecognisable.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>This home is managed by a suitably qualified individual with 10 years of experience in residential childcare. This is his first role as a registered manager and he admits it is a steep learning curve, but he is benefiting from clear direction and support from his new line manager.</p> <p>The challenges have been exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the team are inexperienced and unqualified and they have been covering vacancies for a sustained period of time. During this inspection, one member of staff left at 12.00pm and returned at 10.00am. Another individual was clearly showing signs of fatigue.</p> <p>In response, they have just successfully recruited to all the vacant residential carer positions, which will also improve the current gender imbalance. However, there remains a team leader vacancy, which is a critical role in leading shifts.</p> <p>Comments from staff include, 'We are a new team which is still learning', 'I am happy working here. It's a really positive team and we work well together. I am confident putting my views forward in team meetings, but we are understaffed and I am not getting fortnightly supervision', 'Staffing has been very tight so we have been working long shifts' and, 'Staffing levels have just increased, which will hopefully take some pressure off us.'</p>	

Formal individual supervisions sessions are not consistently taking place at the frequency prescribed in this company's own policy, which is of particular concern given the overall inexperience of this staff team.

This company has an established system in place for ensuring that all new staff receive eight days of induction prior to commencing three shadow shifts. This ensures that they complete the company's nine compulsory courses and was described by a member of staff as, 'Excellent'. This organisation has also recently contracted with a new training provider, which offers a much wider range of opportunities to enhance personal development and career progression. Moreover, new staff will enrol onto the required level 3 qualification after three months of employment rather than six. This is to improve the timeliness of completion of the required qualifications. The registered manager said, 'The opportunities are fantastic with this new training company.'

The manager has an accurate and realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. However, he has not established an effective internal system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating patterns and trends and identifying necessary actions to improve constantly upon the quality of care provided. This means, for example, that not all records are maintained to a good quality standard.

This company has recently changed providers of their independent monitoring visits due to frequent inaccuracies in the content and clear evidence of cutting and pasting by their previous provider. This has resulted in a more robust process and detailed monthly reports with clear recommendations, to help to improve upon the quality of care provided continually. However, the reports do not consistently demonstrate consultation with parents and relatives to help inform their opinion as to whether children are always safeguarded effectively and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

Notifications of significant events are forwarded to Ofsted in a timely manner. These demonstrate good partnership working with other relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people and appropriate agreed strategies are put in place to try to prevent a reoccurrence.

The registered manager accurately concluded, 'The team has massive potential and is passionate. Progress has been slower than hoped, but I am now receiving good support and direction from my new line manager who is very experienced.'

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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