

Children's homes inspection – Full

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| Inspection date | 11/10/2016 |
| Unique reference number | 1159272 |
| 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 |

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| Responsible individual | Anthony Gallaher |
| Registered manager | Paul O'Neill |
| Inspector | Michele Hargan |

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| Inspection date | 11/10/2016 |
| 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 | 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 |

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Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress, particularly regarding their social and emotional development.
- Young people receive effective help that reflects their individual needs.
- Staff and young people benefit from the services and support of a clinical psychologist.
- Increased joint working between the staff and the police has improved the safety of young people.
- Young people receive support from an independent advocate at their request.
- The manager challenges the local authority when there are any concerns that may compromise young people's welfare.
- Staff feel well supported by the manager.
- Professionals are confident that the home is run primarily for the benefit of young people.

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 recommendations:

- Care which meets the child's needs and promotes their welfare, taking into account the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. In particular, ensure that a written health protocol is in place advising staff as to how to manage safely any medical devices that young people are reliant on for their ongoing health needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2).
- Ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment. In particular, ensure that young people do not have to sign any of the home's documentation routinely as a means of indicating their participation, including discussions with key workers. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. In particular, ensure that further risk assessments are only completed when a new risk is identified and that these documents reflect young people's individual needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1).
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's

statement of purpose.

- detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications)
- detail the process for managing and improving poor performance
- detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home’s manager. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.8).

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring 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. There should be clear lines of accountability. In particular, indicate within the minutes of team meetings the individual responsibility of staff to comply with any arising actions, by when and whether these are achieved and if not what action is taken as a result. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.20).
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, ensure that the registered manager verifies and records the outcome of the reference checks. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, 61 paragraph 13.1).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home may accommodate up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 24/02/2016 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |

Inspection judgements

| | Judgement grade |
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| <p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p> | <p>Good</p> |
| <p>Young people make good progress, taking into account the level of their needs at the time of admission. Staff, social workers and young people themselves notice these changes, particularly the positive impact of their improved emotional well-being. A social worker said, 'Staff have helped her really feel at home. She has made massive progress in her development.' A young person said, 'I think I am a lot more mature.'</p> <p>Staff know young people well and they invest in helping them to make positive choices and improve their future outcomes. This was apparent at inspection, as staff invited young people's views, listened to what they said and offered them emotional reassurance. This approach builds meaningful relationships between young people and staff.</p> <p>Young people now have access to a phone for their personal use. This means that they can contact independent sources of help. Within care planning and review meetings, young people choose to be accompanied by an advocate to help them express their views, wishes and feelings. This type of support empowers young people and respects their right to influence decision-making. These developments meet a previous requirement.</p> <p>Staff use sensitive persistence to help young people establish morning and bedtime routines. This means that good school attendance is a central part of young people's day. This increases the likelihood of academic success. A social worker said, 'She is engaging with her education and that is really good.'</p> <p>Staff respond quickly and in a supportive way to any concerning issues affecting young people. These nurturing responses mean that young people feel understood. Staff recognise the reasons underlying young people's distress, and reassure them, enabling them to make more positive choices. A member of staff said, 'I spoke to the young person, I think she was scared, she's alright now and she's going back into school.'</p> <p>Good pre-admission assessments establish whether the home can meet individual young people's needs. Once staff establish a young person's suitability, the transition process starts on a gradual basis. As part of this process, young people receive a helpful guide to the home. This makes it very clear to them what to expect and identifies sources of additional help. This promotes placement stability as young people play a meaningful part in their admission.</p> | |

When young people's needs exceed those that the home can meet, staff liaise with the placing and host authority to identify alternative sources of help. As a result, young people receive effective mental health support. This means that even though young people move on quickly this does not compromise information-sharing to promote consistent care practice. The home stays in contact for as long as it is beneficial to the young person concerned. A member of staff said, 'The young person is on the phone to us every day.'

Young people and staff benefit from the specialist support of a consultant clinical psychologist. Their intervention raises awareness about the impact of childhood trauma and how this affects young people's behaviour. This increased understanding promotes a more collaborative way of working. A member of staff said, 'With input from the new psychology team we have learned to take a different approach, and now I say to the young person, let's do this together.'

Young people are strongly discouraged from smoking. Staff's persistent responses show a determined effort to help young people improve their physical health. Young people with chronic health conditions receive effective help. As a result, young people now take the prescribed medication for their physical needs without issue. This significantly benefits their current and future well-being. However, guidance for staff about medical devices, which are used by some young people, is not in place. While there are no current issues, a lack of such a protocol compromises the ability of staff to take the necessary action in the event of any concerns.

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| | Judgement grade |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
| <p>Young people feel safe at the home. They recognise that their safety is a high priority for staff. Young people respond well to staff who have established boundaries to help keep them safe. They are clear about the expectations and what staff do in response to their behaviour, such as when young people leave the home without permission. A young person said, 'Staff follow you when you go off site.' As a result, incidents of young people going missing have reduced over recent months. This means that young people's vulnerability to child sexual exploitation significantly decreases.</p> <p>Staff use both rewards and sanctions in response to young people's behaviour. Young people learn that staff notice what they do and that they can offer them effective help. These responses encourage young people to take responsibility and to reflect on the choices that they make. Staff respect and take seriously any</p> | |

matters raised by young people. Since the time of the last inspection, two concerns raised by young people are now satisfactorily resolved. These supportive responses help young people to learn about compromise and mediation.

Staff rarely use any physical restraint to manage young people's behaviour. On four occasions since the last inspection, staff have intervened for very short periods lasting only a few seconds to prevent young people from hurting one another. Careful audits by the manager take place within the required timescales of these records. This means that staff know that their practice is subject to review and that they are accountable for ensuring that young people are safe. A senior member of staff said, 'Work has been done with staff to make sure they record any incidents accurately.'

Established links with the designated officer for safeguarding means that professional guidance is available and is followed as necessary, helping to protect young people. A safeguarding professional said, 'I hold the manager in high regard. He phones us promptly about any concerns and takes on board any advice.' This response promotes a culture in which the rights of young people are preserved and the welfare of staff is also given due consideration.

Similarly, professional relationships with the police are in place and continue to improve. This enables ongoing communication, helping to establish a shared understanding about the most effective ways to protect young people. A police representative said, 'The manager attends the VEMT (vulnerable, exploited, missing, trafficked) meeting. I always try and catch up with him before that.'

Recruitment records demonstrate that staff undergo the necessary vetting and checks. However, verifying prospective employees' references is treated as an administrative task. This is a missed opportunity for the registered manager to exercise an appropriate level of responsibility by speaking directly with previous employers to clarify any matters and gain any additional information.

Young people live in a safe area, as demonstrated in the home's locality risk assessment. The well-maintained homely setting is clean and comfortable. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individuality. This helps them to invest in their surroundings and promotes a sense of belonging and value.

Staff give careful consideration to, and undertake advanced planning on, how to reduce young people's concerning behaviour through their risk assessments. These records reflect any known concerns, such as fire setting. Effective review and updating of these assessments ensures that staff are well informed about how best to help young people and keep them safe. These actions meet a previous recommendation. A social worker said, 'I get to see young people's risk assessments and I have to email to confirm I am in agreement.' This approach promotes good sharing of information and multi-agency working. However, some

unnecessary duplication and irrelevant information included in the assessments detracts from the current and real risks.

Staff attempt to promote ownership of records by asking young people to sign some documentation, such as key worker records. This practice is not in keeping with living in a domestic setting, it is at odds with the home's approach to building trusting relationships and it can lead to unnecessary confrontation. A young person said, 'They ask us to sign stuff, but I won't sign anything if I don't want to.'

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| | Judgement grade |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good |
| <p>The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and has been in post since the home opened in September 2015. It is clear that this person is highly motivated and works hard to improve young people's outcomes. Staff are well supported and feel valued by the manager who is a good role model for young people and staff. A health professional said, 'The manager is one of the most dedicated that I have ever worked with and he is very committed to the young people.'</p> <p>Staff and professionals are confident that the home is run primarily for the benefit of young people. Effective communication underpins good working relationships between staff, social workers and other professionals. Social workers receive weekly reports and staff make a meaningful contribution to young people's care planning. A social worker said, 'At reviews there is very good attendance, the manager, the key worker and psychologist all come.'</p> <p>The manager challenges placing authorities when there are concerns that their plans are not in line with young people's best interests. This leads to further consultation and action, such as reviewing young people's arrangements to see their families. This approach means that young people's best interests are at the forefront of any decision-making. Young people's records are well organised and contain the relevant information. The outcome of this is an effective residential plan that makes clear young people's needs and what staff do to support them.</p> <p>Established handover systems enable staff to share information about young people's needs at the start and end of their working day. This promotes a consistent approach, and builds trust and confidence as young people realise that, despite a change of staff, their needs continue to be well met.</p> <p>The manager now notifies Ofsted appropriately about matters that are considered as serious. This means that measures taken to address concerns are open to</p> | |

monitoring from the regulator. This action meets a previous requirement.

Independent visitor reports are thorough and evaluative. The reports show the impact for young people of the care and support they receive from staff. They clearly demonstrate that the home safeguards and promotes the welfare of young people. This approach makes staff accountable for their actions and ensures that there is a swift response to any shortfalls.

Young people have experienced an unsettled period due to an unexpectedly high staff turnover. As a result, existing staff worked additional hours to cover these shortfalls during the summer months to minimise the disruption for young people. Regular use of a small number of agency staff, along with recently appointed additional staff, is now in place. Nonetheless, these circumstances can disrupt established relationships and raise young people's anxieties.

Minutes of team meetings do not make clear to staff their individual responsibilities to comply with arising actions, by when and the outcome in the event of any non-compliance. This omission leaves room for oversight by staff in addressing any care practice issues. Ongoing training completed by the manager and staff and any additional needs are not reflected within the home's workforce plan. This hampers the effective review of their continuing professional development.

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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