

URN 1156098

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a large private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since 13 December 2015.

Visit dates: 8 and 9 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 9 April 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Young people have good relationships with staff. Staff spend time with young people and have respect for their individual achievements. Staff take time to capture precious moments with displayed photographs and scrap books for young people to take with them when they move on.

Children continue to keep in touch with their families, and some relationships have developed. One young person has time alone with a parent; this relationship can be volatile. Staff have supported him with processing this but have not requested a review of the plan with the local authority. As a result, this relationship has deteriorated.

Young people have continued to attend education and have been supported to enrol with subjects they are interested in. One young person did not receive the GCSE grades they had hoped for. The manager and social worker are working together to challenge this.

Staff understand each of the young people's needs. Where additional support is required, staff have referred young people and supported them to work with other agencies.

One young person who moved into the home during the period of COVID-19 said, 'I felt like I knew where I was moving to; I was shown photos before.' Another young person said that staff had 'explained things about COVID'.

Young people have engaged in a range of activities available at the home. There is a trampoline, a basketball net and seating available in the garden. As restrictions eased, young people also enjoyed trips to Blackpool, Alton Towers and the Sea Life Centre.

The safety of children

Staff have an understanding of each young person's background and are aware that this could have an impact on their lives now. Staff have used effective de-escalation techniques and have not used restraint for over two years.

Young people have had times when they have been unsafe in the community and gone missing from home. Staff take steps to report and record these incidents. More information needs to be given to staff about what plans are in place to reduce risk.

Risk assessments are in place for appropriately identified risks. Staff update risk assessments with new information and assess the risk level. Strategies need to be recorded and reviewed after incidents. This will ensure that staff are consistent and that changes can be made when strategies used are ineffective.

Staff noticed that the lockdown period had a positive effect on young people's behaviours. Young people made a choice that they did not want to go out into the community. As a result, relationships have strengthened in the home.

Staff need training in some areas to ensure that they are equipped to work with the young people living in the home. This was set as a requirement in the previous inspection in April 2019. As a result of the pandemic, access to some training has been limited. This is a repeat requirement.

Staff have completed safeguarding training. No allegations have been made by young people. No complaints have been recorded. However, staff also need to undertake complaints training. This will ensure that they do not miss the chance to respond to complaints that are made informally.

When technology has been used inappropriately, appropriate support is received from external agencies. The young person's access to the internet was temporarily removed to keep him safe. He was also supported by the youth offending service to understand the reason for this and the potential consequences of his behaviour.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager has been manager of the home since it opened in 2015. Young people and staff feel supported by the manager. She has worked hard to introduce plans to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Appropriate protective equipment is available at the home, and temperatures of all visitors are taken and recorded.

The manager assessed the matching of each young person moving into the home. On one occasion, she made the decision to end a placement. She carefully considered the changes in risk level and the impact of his behaviour on the other young people. As a result, other young people have felt safer since the young person moved on. One young person moved back into the home after a period of time away as a result of maintaining the relationship. This was a positive move for the young person.

Previous requirements and recommendations that have been met include regular supervision, improvements in the quality of recording and rotas evidencing who has worked each day. A core team of regular staff provides consistent care for children.

Incidents of threatening behaviour and missing from care have been recorded in detail. However, they lack thorough evaluation by the manager. This is a missed opportunity to identify shortfalls and improve the staff approach to preventing and managing risk.

The manager completed a review of the quality of care and submitted it to Ofsted within timescales. However, the report failed to analyse areas of training required by the team.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the children. Virtual visits have included video calls to look around the home and efforts to speak to young people, parents and professionals.

Professionals spoke of good relationships with the manager and staff. When feedback received has been less positive, the manager has not documented the follow-up to this. This has reduced the opportunity to evidence improvements made.

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

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff complete training in epilepsy, sexually harmful behaviour, substance misuse, and criminal exploitation including county lines and complaints.</p>	<p>31/10/2020</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received.</p>	<p>31/10/2020</p>

(Regulation 13 (2)(f)(g)(ii))

In particular, ensure that the manager evaluates strategies and plans in place so that they remain effective in reducing risks. When feedback is received, the manager should ensure that it is used to improve the quality of care.

Recommendations

- Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children’s home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. (see paragraph 15.2). (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- There may be circumstances where children’s homes staff assess that restriction of contact is necessary in the interests of the child, to safeguard them or promote their welfare. This decision should not be taken lightly and must be agreed with the placing authority, where possible, except in an emergency situation, where the placing authority must be notified within 24 hours. (See regulation 22 (5) and (6)). (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 58, paragraph 11.16)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1156098

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: 4th Floor, Waterfront Manbre Wharf, Manbre Road, Hammersmith, London, Middlesex W6 9RH

Responsible individual: Beverley Woods

Registered manager: Rachel Grima

Inspector

Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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