

1225136

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a large private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional or behavioural needs.

There is a manager in place, who was registered with Ofsted in September 2019.

**Visit dates:** 7 to 8 October 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 2 January 2020

**Previous inspection judgement:** Requires improvement to be good

## 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.

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

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 pandemic.

## 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 are making good, and in some cases outstanding, progress from their starting points. They have developed positive relationships with staff and each other. Young people are engaging in education or vocational training and enjoy positive activities, such as driving lessons. Risks in relation to high-risk behaviours have reduced, which means that young people are safer on a day-to-day basis.

Families of young people have seen significant improvements in their well-being and express extremely high levels of satisfaction with the standard of care provided. External professionals also comment on young people's positive progress, which they attribute to their care and support.

Young people's transitions in and out of the home are carefully planned. One young person who recently moved to the home, showed his newly decorated bedroom. He said he enjoyed choosing his glow in the dark wallpaper, which he felt made his room cosy at nights. Another young person who recently moved out of the home to his own flat, received carefully planned, sensitive support to help him adapt to independent living.

Young people are supported to maintain contact with people who are important to them. In some cases, contact arrangements are complex and require careful planning, which is managed effectively. Families confirmed that young people were enabled to keep in touch through various means, such as video calls, during periods of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerable effort was made to provide young people with fun and fulfilling activities throughout periods of lockdown. Picture diaries show a host of innovative and creative activities, which all of the young people engaged in.

## **The safety of children**

Young people are able to speak with staff about their worries and raise concerns. When they do so, their concerns are listened to and acted upon. This helps young people to feel safe.

There is evidence of reducing risks to young people's safety and well-being. For example, one young person was assessed as being at high risk of exploitation when he was admitted to the home. External professionals have recently reduced his risk level to 'low' due to his positive progress. Levels of supervision, which were prescribed by the court for another young person, have also recently been reviewed and lowered due to a reduction in high-risk behaviours.

Staff show a clear understanding of young people's individual risk management plans, which are regularly reviewed and updated. Clear strategies, which include multi-agency agreement, support consistently effective practice.

Young people do not go missing from this home on a frequent basis. However, there have been occasions when young people have been away from the home without permission. There are clear protocols in place that provide staff with guidance about the action they must take to safeguard young people who are missing. However, independent return interviews have not always been carried out.

Staff regularly carry out positive work with young people in areas such as personal safety, exploitation and safe relationships. This helps young people to develop their understanding and to learn about keeping themselves safe.

### **Leaders and managers**

There is a suitably qualified manager in place who has been registered with Ofsted since September 2019. The manager is highly child-focused and demonstrates a strong commitment to improving outcomes for young people in her care.

External professionals and staff are complimentary about the home's leadership. Professionals describe collaborative working and effective communication. Staff say that they receive excellent levels of support and guidance.

The manager has made significant improvements to the admission process. The admission of the most recent young person was carefully considered and well planned. This helped to ensure that the young person's needs were fully understood prior to his admission. As a result, he has settled well.

Care planning is effective. There are well-detailed plans in place covering all aspects of young people's needs. The manager ensures that these are regularly reviewed and evaluated. This means that young people's progress is carefully monitored.

A number of requirements and recommendations were made at the home's last inspection. The manager has addressed these and significantly improved processes for internal monitoring. The manager responds to incidents and concerns in a constructive manner. Careful analysis and evaluation help the manager to identify potential learning, which supports continuous improvement.

### **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

#### **Recommendations**

- Specifically relating to young people smoking, the registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home,

planned support to assist young people to stop smoking is clearly recorded within their care plans and agreed by the young person's social worker. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1225136

**Registered provider:** Cambian Childcare LTD

**Registered provider address:** Cambian Childcare Limited, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

**Responsible individual:** Beverley Woods

**Registered manager:** Cassandra Knagg

## Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

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