

1258091

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to five children who have suffered early life trauma. The home provides therapeutic support from an in-house clinical team. There is a registered manager in post.

Visit dates: 8 to 9 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 8 May 2019

Previous inspection judgement: 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

The home has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children live in a calm and nurturing environment. They say they are happy and feel safe living in the home.

Staff form positive relationships with children based on trust. They value children's wishes and feelings and help them to express their emotions in a safe way. One child displays a high level of anxiety when they see professionals. When they moved into the home they would display aggressive behaviour towards staff. They would also request to leave. This child has now developed positive attachments with staff. As a result, incidents of aggressive behaviour have reduced, and the child no longer asks to leave the home.

Staff have a good understanding of children's lived experiences. The home works alongside an in-house clinical team which provides staff with advice and guidance in relation to therapeutic care. As a result, staff are sensitive to children's needs and respond with empathy. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

One child has complex health needs. Staff administer dialysis and medication to them several times daily. There is a detailed health plan and risk assessment which outlines to staff how to meet this child's needs. Staff attend specialist training with health professionals about the child's health condition. As a result, this child's health needs are safely met.

During the lockdown as a result of COVID-19, staff completed a range of activities with children, including baking, yoga, and growing plants. One child raised £70 for charity after completing a sponsored walk around the garden. Photographs of the children smiling and laughing together while engaging in these activities are on display in the home. These memories help children to develop positive emotional well-being.

Staff support children to keep in touch with their family members. This is despite the restrictions in place as a result of COVID-19. They do so by facilitating video calls and telephone calls. They also ensure that face-to-face contact takes place while adhering to the rules around social distancing. As a result, children develop a positive sense of identity.

The safety of children

Staff sometimes restrict children's movements when responding to children's behaviour. One child with complex health needs sometimes displays aggressive behaviour during their dialysis. They can refuse to take their medication and sabotage their medical equipment. During these times, they are at risk of significant harm. To keep this child safe, staff sometimes hold them. Professionals have confirmed that there would be a serious risk of harm to this child otherwise.

The registered manager has oversight of all incidents which occur in the home. They are undertaking a review of all incidents during which physical restraint occurs. This is to identify any patterns or trends. This will help to identify how staff can support children's behaviour.

The in-house clinical team works with the manager to help inform risk assessments. As a result, staff have clear guidance and strategies to use when responding to children's behaviours. Staff help children to understand their behaviours and how staff may respond to them. Children told inspectors that they know why staff sometimes 'hold' them. That this is to keep them safe and everyone else safe in the home. Children receive rewards for positive behaviour, such as superhero medals or picking a gift out of the lucky dip box.

There have been allegations made against staff at the home. Inspectors found that the manager responds to allegations appropriately. The manager has worked with social workers and the designated officer to devise a managing allegations protocol. This means that there are clear actions staff take when responding to allegations. Since the protocol has been in place, allegations have significantly reduced.

Leaders and managers

Children and staff benefit from strong leadership in the home. The experienced registered manager is committed to improving the lives of children and has developed a skilled and knowledgeable staff team that is passionate about caring for children. The manager has formed strong relationships with partnership agencies. Professionals provide positive feedback about the management of the home. One social worker commented that the progress of the child they work with has been 'fantastic'. Another said that the staff 'capture the views of the child' in a way they are unable to due to the positive relationships staff form with children.

There is robust monitoring in place which provides the manager with clear oversight of the quality of care provided to children. This is evident in the home's recording processes and procedures. For example, the manager uses a 'golden hour' daily check which includes an audit of medication. They also complete weekly and monthly audits which have clear actions. As a result, shortfalls in staff practice are quickly identified and addressed.

Staff receive support to reflect on their practice during regular supervision and 'upskilling' sessions. The manager is keen to develop ways of showing how staff put theory to practice.

Staff undertake training pertinent to children's needs. This includes working with children who have complex health needs and those who display sexualised behaviour. This means that staff are able to recognise and respond safely to children's complex needs and behaviours.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1258091

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Caretech Limited, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Clare Hadfield

Registered manager: Bethany Sutherland

Inspector

Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector

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