

1155775

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large private organisation. It provides care for one young person who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The registered manager post has been vacant since May 2020. A manager has been appointed. She has not yet applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 9 July 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 same young person has been cared for at the home throughout the reporting period. This young person, with complex emotional health needs, has been supported to establish herself in the home. She has built trusting relationships with the majority of the staff team. As a result, she has been supported to make progress in addressing her emotional health.

There was an initial delay in registering the young person with primary care services locally due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has now been achieved. Specialist services are in place in relation to mental health provision. There are appropriate plans in place for the transition of support from child and adolescent services to young adult provision.

The young person is supported by staff to have supervised family time in the community. This has been adapted effectively to meet local restrictions in response to Covid-19. This means that the young person has been able to maintain important relationships. This in turn supports her sense of identity and belonging.

After a substantial period away from formal education, the young person is now thriving in further education. There is regular and effective communication between the college and the staff in the home. This exchange of information promotes the young person's well-being in and out of college and supports her educational progress.

The safety of children

The risks associated with the young person's emotional well-being are well understood. Clear risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. As a result, staff have the information they need to support the young person and reduce and manage risks.

Staff provide a timely and appropriate response to concerns in relation to self-harm. They have the knowledge and understanding of the young person in their care, which means they are well placed to support her at times of crisis. This has contributed to a reduction in the frequency of self-harming behaviours over recent months.

The young person told the inspector that she has found it helpful on occasions to be able to write her feelings down for staff to read rather than to talk about her emotions. This written exchange of information has been used effectively to assist staff to support the young person.

The amount of free, unsupervised time the young person has, has changed to reflect changes in assessment of risk. There is evidence available to support this decision-making. The young person has challenged the amount of free time she has. Arrangements have been put in place for this to be reviewed with the local authority. As a result, the young person has an opportunity to express her views with the adults who care for her.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager post has been vacant since May 2020. The home has been managed on an interim basis by an experienced and skilled registered manager from one of the organisation's other homes. She has now been appointed to manage the home on a permanent basis. She has not yet applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Staff hold the manager in high regard. They value her support and judgement. This has been particularly important during the ongoing period of COVID-19 restrictions. One member of staff self-isolated with the young person for 14 days in the home. She told the inspector about the support given to her by the manager during this time.

Staff have continued to have regular supervision during the reporting period, although some of this has taken place virtually. Online training has been in place during this time. There are plans for the staff team to have face-to-face behaviour management training this month. This will ensure all members of the team are working together in line with the organisation's model of behaviour management.

The manager has ensured that changes to staffing in the home meet the needs of the young person. Staff brought in to support the staff team have come from one of the sister homes. This consistency of staffing has been a significant factor in supporting the young person's increased feelings of security and stability.

The manager plays an active role in the oversight of care planning. She responds to incidents in the home in a timely and effective manner. This gives confidence to both the young person and staff that there is effective scrutiny of practice.

Recommendations

- Every home must have a person managing it. Under regulation 27, that person will either be: the registered provider if they are an individual, and fit person to manage a children's home; or an individual that the registered provider appoints as manager. (Guide to the Children's Home Regulations including the quality standards, paragraph 12.2, page 60)

Specifically, the interim manager should apply for registration with Ofsted.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1155775

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Leanne Woodings

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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