

1225371

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of homes operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people aged up to 18 years. The home offers a holistic package for young people with individual complex needs.

The home has a registered manager.

There are currently two young people living at the home and they were spoken to as part of the visit.

**Visit dates:** 9 to 10 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 is comfortable, warm and welcoming. Young people said, 'It feels like home and the staff are amazing,' and 'I feel safe and happy.' Staff share very positive relationships with the young people and listen to their views. This helps young people to feel valued and respected.

Young people make progress from their individual starting points. One young person told the inspector that the move to this home has improved his life and prevented his involvement in crime. His social worker said, 'The home and the staff team have given him an alternative life.' This means that young people are supported to positively change their behaviours and reduce risk taking. Staff understand the needs of the young people. They talk about the young people with warmth and take pride in their progress.

Young people are making progress in education. One young person attends full-time education and has excellent attendance. One young person is completing their mock examinations and staff support them by taking them to and from the educational provision.

There are clear plans in place to address the young people's health needs. Staff work with external agencies to ensure that young people's physical and emotional health needs are met. Young people are supported to understand the risk in relation to COVID-19 and how to keep themselves safe. One young person said, 'The staff have told me about keeping a safe distance, to sanitise my hands and to wear a mask.'

Young people are supported to maintain contact with their family and friends. The staff have adapted the contact to ensure that the COVID-19 restrictions are adhered to. For example, they have arranged to meet family members outside and identified suitable locations to maintain social distancing. When contact arrangements have been changed in order to adhere to COVID-19 guidance, staff have talked to young people and fully explained the reason for this. This has helped the young people to understand.

### **The safety of children**

Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans detail how to keep young people safe. Staff understand the risks to young people and follow the strategies contained in the plans. However, some risk assessments do not identify all known risks to the young people. For example, one young person previously at risk of child sexual exploitation did not have this risk identified in the plans.

Consequently, there were no clear strategies such as phone or social media checks being completed by staff to ensure that she was safe.

There is a consistent staff team working in the home, which helps to ensure continuity of care for the young people. The home uses staff from some of the provider's other homes as required. The initial COVID-19 lockdown impacted on staffing levels in the home. Changes to the staff team during this time created some unsettled behaviour for the young people living in the home and an increase in incidents.

The number of young people going missing from the home is low. Staff understand the policies and procedures to follow if young people were to go missing from home.

The quality of the relationships between staff and the young people helps to ensure that physical intervention is rarely used in the home. The staff talk to young people and understand their individual triggers to ensure that incidents do not escalate. When a physical intervention has been used to keep the young person or others safe, young people are given the opportunity to speak to an independent person. However, staff are not consistently receiving an independent debrief following an incident. This prevents staff from having the opportunity to raise any concerns or to reflect on their own or other staff's practice.

Although most incidents in the home contain management oversight, not all have been fully analysed and evaluated by the manager. This limits the management scrutiny of significant incidents. It also prevents the opportunity for learning and to improve practice in the home.

The referral process for young people moving into the home is robust. This ensures that only young people whose needs can be fully met by the staff team are admitted into the home. However, a full assessment and evaluation of the compatibility of the young person moving into the home with those already living in the home would further improve this process. This has not had an impact as the current young people share a positive relationship.

## **Leaders and managers**

The manager of the home is experienced and qualified and is supported by a deputy manager. They understand young people's individual needs and ensure that the team provides safe and effective care to the young people.

Staff say they feel happy working in the home and are supported by the manager. They receive regular supervision and are encouraged by the manager to develop their knowledge and skills.

Staff receive a good standard of training. However, not all staff are trained in managing self-harm, despite children living in the home presenting with this risk. One young person who previously lived at the home started to use ligatures as part of self-harming behaviour. The staff did not receive training in how to safely manage

this behaviour. This means that staff did not have the necessary experience and skills to meet the escalating needs of the young person.

The manager and staff work well with external agencies, and social workers speak highly of the quality of care provided to the young people. There is regular communication with professionals. One social worker said, 'I get a weekly report from the home 'they [Staff] let me know about any issues and communication is good.

Despite several changes in permanent staff members working in the home, the provider has not notified Ofsted of the revisions and provided an updated copy of the statement of purpose. The manager also works over two homes. Therefore, the rotas need to reflect the actual hours he has worked in each home.

## 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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p>	14 January 2021
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	14 January 2021

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to HMCI and make a copy of it available upon request to—</p> <p>a person who works at the home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b))</p>	<p>14 January 2021</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1225371

**Registered provider:** Cambian Childcare Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Sharron Edwards

**Registered manager:** Christopher White

## Inspector

Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020