

# 1159272

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

A private company owns and manages this home. The home provides a tailored care programme, for approximately a year, for up to four young females aged between 11 and 18 years who have experienced, or who are at risk of, sexual exploitation.

It is likely that these children will also have emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties as a result of their experiences. No children lived in the home between 23 March 2020 and 2 June 2020.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 16 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

### **Inspection dates: 6 to 7 May 2021**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 29 May 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2019	Full	Good
05/06/2018	Full	Good
31/07/2017	Full	Good
22/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Children's experiences and progress are poor. This is because leadership and management are ineffective, and children are at risk of serious and significant harm. As a result of this inspection, Ofsted has issued a notice of suspension against this setting and three compliance notices.

Children are being cared for by staff that they barely know or by staff that they have never met. Children say that they feel disconnected from staff, and that this brings fear and anxiety. As a result, children question their self-worth and they do not make progress. Confrontation occurs because children are treated unfairly, and boundaries are blurred. One child said, 'There is nothing good about this home, there is no routine, the staff are always changing, some staff have attitude and treat children differently.'

Attendance in education is sporadic. Children struggle within the school environment, and they have recently been excluded on a number of occasions. Children say that they are treated differently than other students. Leaders and managers do not address the barriers to children's learning. This means that children rarely complete their weekly education timetable and are unable to reach their full potential.

There are blurred boundaries around smoking tobacco. Until recently, children were not allowed to smoke. However, rules recently changed to permit children to smoke outside of the home. Children now routinely smoke tobacco and have disengaged from smoking-cessation courses. There are occasions when children have smoked cannabis and staff have failed to prevent this. This is detrimental to children's physical and mental health.

Children are at risk of exploitation. They do not engage with the three-step therapeutic model approach used in the home to reduce this risk. This is because children do not receive the care and support from staff that they need. This risk is further increased by children having unauthorised access to mobile phones despite plans in place that should prevent this.

Children's access to community activities is restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They often refuse to interact with staff, and they are isolating themselves in their bedrooms. The children's experience of positive social connection is extremely limited. This increases concerns about the impact of loneliness on their mental health.

Family time arrangements for children are facilitated by the staff and take place in line with each child's local authority plan. However, there are occasions when the local authority plan works directly against the model of care of this home. This means that some children have unsupervised time with their families prior to this being assessed as safe. Children perceive this difference as being unfair, and this influences their disengagement from the model of care.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

Leaders and managers do not ensure that children are protected from harm. They do not take appropriate steps to manage and reduce risks to children's safety. For example, children are permitted access to smoking materials, including lighters. This is despite an incident whereby a child burnt a member of staff with a lighter.

Staff do not take immediate action to keep children safe, and they do not consistently follow children's care plans and risk assessments. As a result, there are occasions when children have been in possession of cannabis and had unauthorised access to a mobile phone.

Staff do not have the skills they need to manage children's behaviours and risks effectively. They do not help the children to understand the effect that their actions have on others, or how these may place them at risk of serious harm. Without this understanding, children are not motivated to change their behaviours. Consequently, significant incidents occur daily. Children make allegations against the staff, and staff have been injured by the children. For example, staff have been assaulted and distracted while driving. The registered manager does not take appropriate action to reduce the likelihood of harm to staff, and staff continue to do lone working with children.

Significant incidents have occurred at the home where staff misconduct and practice have placed children at risk of potential harm. The registered manager does not routinely notify Ofsted of these events. This regulatory breach has an impact on the regulator's oversight of the protection of children.

Staffing shortages mean that staff are working back-to-back shifts with limited time for breaks. Staff are exhausted, and their relationships with the children are strained. As a result, children are increasingly hostile towards staff.

The home environment is not routinely checked for potential hazards. Discarded disposable razors and cleaning products are accessible to children as these items are not routinely disposed of or stored safely.

Safer recruitment processes are not followed. Staff are working in the home without full and verified employment checks and references. Furthermore, staff have done lone working with children despite being assessed by the registered manager to not have the necessary experience or skills for their role. These practices place children at risk of harm as the provider cannot be assured that staff are safe and suitable to work with vulnerable children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

The leadership and management of the home are ineffective. In addition, children and staff experienced further instability for the period when both the registered manager and deputy manager were absent from work. The temporary management arrangements in place to bridge this gap were counterproductive.

Staffing arrangements do not reflect children's needs or the risks to their safety. The unmanaged rota results in staffing instability. There are limited permanent staff at the home, with a number of staff leaving, absent from work due to sickness or suspended from their positions. The registered manager and other staff raised concerns regarding insufficient staffing to senior managers in the organisation. These concerns were not resolved, leaving children at risk of harm.

To mitigate staffing shortages, the registered manager has covered shifts. This has had an impact on her ability to spend time monitoring, reviewing and quality assuring care practices. As a result, internal monitoring systems are incomplete and ineffective.

Staff are not suitably trained to meet the children's complex needs, with specific gaps in restraint and advanced exploitation training. Appointed staff have not sufficiently completed their corporate induction, with identified shortfalls within their care practice and experience. The staff are not receiving regular supervision. These are all missed opportunities to improve standards and develop the staff's knowledge and experience within their role.

There are significant gaps within the children's records. This is the information about their journey through care. Information is not captured by those who have first-hand

knowledge of children’s routines. This means that children do not have an accurate account of their time in the home.

The children’s records are incomplete, and systems in the home to share and plan the day-to-day care of the children are ineffective. Staff are working in an unfamiliar home without access to clear written or verbal guidance about the children and their specific needs. Consequently, staff are not consistently following the boundaries and routines in the home, leading to children being treated unfairly and boundaries becoming blurred.

Complaints are not routinely recorded. The staff have raised complaints to the manager, but the absence of a complaints record means that action is not taken or a response received. This is a missed opportunity for concerns raised by staff or children to be formally heard and resolved to effect necessary change.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose; and treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, staff practice and conduct should consistently reflect the ethos of the home as detailed in the statement of</p>	<p>13 June 2021</p>

<p>purpose to ensure that the children are respected and valued.</p> <p>This requirement is repeated from the last inspection.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (Regulation 8 (1))</p>	2 July 2021
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i))</p>	2 July 2021
<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.</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; and</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)(d))</p>	13 June 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>	13 June 2021

<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> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and</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—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(ii))</p>	
<p>*The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home if the individual satisfies the requirements of paragraph (3)</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p>	<p>13 June 2021</p>

<p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(b)(c)(d))</p>	
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(b))</p>	2 July 2021
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))</p>	2 July 2021
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>	2 July 2021

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the ‘Social care common inspection framework’. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’.



## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1159272

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Cambian Childcare Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Paul O'Neill

**Registered manager:** Amanda Oliver

## Inspectors

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

Brian Wood, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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