

1226978

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 children's home. The home provides care for up to two children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The home has not had a registered manager since April 2020. A manager was recruited but was not suitable to be registered. Another manager has been appointed but is not yet registered.

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 15 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 July 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 failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 3 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/09/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Full	Good
20/02/2018	Full	Good
24/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children's overall experiences and progress is inadequate. This is because leaders, managers and staff failed to take appropriate action to protect children from the potential risk of serious harm. Furthermore, the home has been without a registered manager since April 2020.

Children enjoy good relationships with most staff. Staff make efforts to get to know children and to understand the individual issues that are important to them. This helps children to feel valued. As a result, children invest in the home and come to see it as their home.

The education outcomes for children are mixed. One child has made notable progress with their attendance and achievements at school. However, staff were unable to help another child to maintain their previous good progress. This child has not completed planned examinations, and this limits their opportunities for the future.

Children's emotional well-being is supported. A psychologist works with staff to help them understand the impact of trauma on children. This helps staff to intervene effectively when children are distressed or struggling to understand their own emotions.

Children are generally healthy. Staff encourage them to eat a balanced diet and to engage in active pastimes. For example, one child has been kayaking and regularly goes on long walks in the countryside with staff. Such activities continued when they could during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Children take part in discussions about healthy lifestyles, which include the problems caused by eating too many sugary snacks. As a result of children's physical health being promoted, their emotional health and well-being also improves.

Children keep in touch with family and friends. Staff help with the practical arrangements, which is much appreciated by children's relatives. Children are helped to settle when they move into the home, by seeing and speaking to those who are important to them. This has a significant impact on children, whose sense of identity is supported through this contact.

The communal areas of the home are much improved since the last inspection. One child has commented about how much better everything looks. However, both children's bedrooms need work. Staff bought some items during the inspection, which improved one room. Much more work is required in the other bedroom. The current state of this room does not convey the message that staff value the child. This is essential for the child to develop their self-esteem. In addition, the child is not learning good habits for the future.

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

A member of staff enabled one child to buy a weapon from the internet. It is illegal for children to buy this type of weapon. The staff member did not take into account risk assessments for the child concerned. There was no consideration of the potential harm that could be caused to others, including the other child in the home, and no consideration with regard to the message that this action gave to the child about the use of weapons and breaking the law. The member of staff did not talk to colleagues or managers about their actions. This was a significant safeguarding event.

Action taken by leaders and staff once the child had the weapon was ineffective. Leaders and staff did not ensure the immediate safety of children or those working in and living near the home. Leaders and staff did not give the child a clear message about the risks involved. This lack of rigour led to a potentially serious incident involving the child and a member of staff.

Leaders' slow, poorly evaluated response to this incident failed to place children's safety at the centre of their practice. The child felt they were at fault and did not want to get staff into trouble. The child was not given a clear message that what happened was the responsibility of adults. Leaders could not explain the rationale for their actions or those of the staff member. This means that the regulator cannot be confident that a different, but equally concerning, event could not happen again.

Aside from this incident, the approach to managing risk is mostly effective. Risk management plans are based on the detailed knowledge that staff develop about children. Staff undertake training when this is required to improve their knowledge. This means that children's risks are clearly understood.

Staff use individualised plans to help them respond to children's emotional and behavioural needs. These plans are effective for the children currently in the home. However, staff could not positively influence one child, whose needs were beyond their capabilities. This had a significant impact and the child subsequently moved to another placement. Although the child had some positive memories of living in the home, the ending of the placement is likely to have added to their poor sense of self.

Staff talk to children about issues such as substance misuse, self-harm and going missing from home. These conversations give a powerful message to children that staff care about them and want them to be safe. Such incidents rarely happen. Despite this, risk management plans are in place and are reviewed frequently. This means that staff know what to do and can act swiftly if a child is at risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been no registered manager in this home for 15 months. The lack of strategic management oversight has had an impact on outcomes for children. No

one person has had responsibility for the development of the staff team. Children's safety and well-being is poorer because of this gap in the leadership and management of the home.

The decision to appoint the former manager was extremely poor. He did not meet regulatory requirements. Senior leaders accept their failing in the recruitment of this manager. They acknowledge that this decision had serious consequences for the functioning of the home.

Some staff do not consistently behave professionally in this home. This has been an issue for several months, despite training events to educate the staff team. Unprofessional practice was an additional aspect of the serious safeguarding incident. Senior leaders do not understand the reason for this issue. This means that they, and the regulator, cannot be confident that the latest training event will be more successful. This means that children are still at risk.

The home is now fully staffed. This is an improvement, following a period of instability within the staff team. All staff are qualified or will be within the required timeframe. Consequently, children are being looked after by adults they know well and who are gaining the knowledge and skills required to care for them properly.

Staff are provided with training to meet the needs of children. Routine mandatory learning is up to date and extra training events are arranged as required. For example, staff learned about a child's particular communication needs before they moved into the home. This approach to training means that staff can provide attuned care for children, based on their individual circumstances.

Staff feel supported by current managers in the home. They receive regular supervision and appraisal of practice. Staff were unsettled by the lack of a registered manager, but say they feel positive about the new management arrangements. This is important for children, who need to be looked after by staff who receive the support they need to perform well.

Managers have systems to monitor the quality of care provided to children. Systems include some evaluation of children's progress and issues relating to staffing. However, the analysis is overly positive. It does not help leaders and managers to understand where changes are required. For example, the impact of professional behaviour training is not understood. The new manager accepts this shortfall and is committed to improving monitoring processes. It is too early to know the effectiveness of these changes.

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, the 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; and</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, staff to help children to manage any anxieties about going to school, so that they complete their education.</p>	29 August 2021
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p>	29 August 2021

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; and</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(xi))</p> <p>In particular, staff to have the skills to understand and meet the behavioural and emotional needs of children, including those with additional complexities.</p>	
<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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</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</p>	<p>29 August 2021</p>

<p>effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff to act to keep children safe, including not enabling them to buy items that would place them at risk.</p>	
<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> <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 work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers to understand what prevents staff from consistently behaving professionally and to take steps to ensure that such behaviour does not happen again. The approach to monitoring to be more evaluative, to better understand where changes need to be made.</p>	<p>29 August 2021</p>
<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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person to ensure that they recruit a manager who meets the requirements of the children's homes regulations.</p>	<p>29 August 2021</p>

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff provide children with well-equipped, personalised bedrooms that are maintained in a good state of repair, even when children state that this is not important to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 1226978

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Susan Fitzsimmons

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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