

1235818

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care for up to four children. The home provides a programme for young females who have experienced or who are at risk of sexual exploitation. It is likely that these children will also have social, emotional and mental health difficulties as a result of their experiences.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 2 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/07/2019	Full	Good
25/07/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
10/04/2018	Full	Good
08/01/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The nurture and attention that the children receive from the staff help them to make progress and make happy childhood memories. Individually and collectively, children achieve outcomes that have a positive impact on their safety, protection and well-being.

Children's personalised education plans help them to overcome educational barriers. Children who have not attended school for a number of years gain the confidence they need to re-engage. Through improved school attendance, children have achieved their aspirations. One child said, 'I have not been to school for three years, and I have now got the qualifications that I wanted in maths and English.'

Childhood trauma and neglect have contributed to the children's health needs. Children now have access to, and attend, all necessary health appointments. Children recognise that they are healthier. The children have experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 in the home. During this difficult time, a small cohort of staff nurtured and entertained the children throughout their isolation.

Children have access to in-house therapy. Children respond to therapy differently, and the clinical psychologist provides tailored sessions based on knowing each child's needs. The staff are very responsive to therapeutic guidance and confidently implement agreed strategies to help children with their emotional well-being. One child has made exceptional progress in all areas of their development because of this approach.

The children's time is spent enjoying hobbies and activities. Scrapbooks capture each child's time at the home and provide a record they can look back at to remind them of the things they have done.

Staff drive the length and breadth of the country so that children can see their families. One parent said, 'The staff are brilliant, they are so supportive.' When children are in their family homes, boundaries have been blurred and children have been at risk. If staff identify any concerns during family time, plans are reviewed with social workers to ensure that this time is safe and positive for the children.

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

Missing-from-home incidents are infrequent. On the rare occasion that a child has been missing from the home, the staff have taken immediate action to ensure their safe return. The urgent response taken by staff, alongside the police, is proportionate to the children's risk of exploitation. Children's understanding of risk is developing, and while children enjoy free time within the community, this has not led to any missing-from-home incidents.

Consistent routines and boundaries help to manage and reduce risks to children's safety. The staff give the children consistent guidance and necessary supervision. While children develop their ability to make safe choices, things that increase their risk of exploitation are restricted, for example social media.

Planned moves into the home provide the children with the time to meet with staff and ask questions. Group living can be hard for children. The manager reviews the needs and risks of all the children to help ensure any impact is minimised.

The group dynamic is a trigger for incidents of verbal and physical aggression. Children report that peer relationships impact on their happiness. Incidents of bullying are addressed by the manager and the staff team. Staff knowledge and understanding of bullying is enhanced through training. Good staffing levels mean that children are adequately supervised to prevent, or immediately respond to, any potential incidents.

On occasion, children have been physically held by the staff, and one time a casual agency staff member has also restrained a child. This does not reflect good practice as this agency staff member did not have the skills or competency to confidently use physical restraint techniques. This potentially places children at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home is led by strong and committed leaders. The manager provides staff with continued support and guidance. This strengthens their knowledge and practice. The staff are committed to their role in helping the children to achieve their outcomes.

Despite staffing vacancies, the children are generally cared for by their core staff, with whom they have trusting relationships. Staff retention and recruitment are focus areas of development for the organisation. Appointed staff are subject to safer recruitment checks and benefit from a detailed induction into their role before caring for the children.

Agency staff are being used to bolster staffing numbers. The manager has developed procedures to ensure agency staff have the necessary practice knowledge. Agency staff for this home now receive an induction about their role and responsibilities and also receive practice-based supervision. However, the recruitment checks for agency staff are not consistently sufficient, and this raises questions about the suitability of individual staff.

Children are regularly involved in discussions about their care and about the home. However, children said that they feel their wishes and feelings are not consistently listened to and that they find the current arrangements for sharing information 'useless'. This restricts children's involvement in the development of the home.

Children do not have access to their written records, and their voice is not evident within their plans or progress reports. Because the children do not know what is

written about them, they worry that new staff may form preconceived ideas about them through reading their files.

The manager has systems in place for managing and monitoring care practices, and this ensures that the children receive consistent and good-quality care. The manager strives to develop the staff and challenges shortfalls in staff practice or conduct. Professional and family feedback is positive. They consistently recognise that the children are making progress.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that the appointment of agency or casual staff is in line with safer recruitment procedures.</p>	30 March 2022
<p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (2))</p>	30 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the responsible adults balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children are actively encouraged to read their records and to add further information to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.6)

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: 1235818

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: Claire Sutcliffe

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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