

1159397

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. Care is provided for up to three children aged between 11 and 18 years. The home provides a therapeutic programme for children who have experienced, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation.

The home registered in March 2016. There has been no registered manager in post since June 2021. The appointed manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the home, and they have recently applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

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 and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 18 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2021	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/09/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

There are significant shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home and in the safety and protection of children. Consequently, despite some measurable progress for some children, their overall experiences are inadequate.

Children do not live in a settled home. The frequency and severity of missing-from-home incidents dominate the routines in the home. This is detrimental to children's emotional well-being and creates a chaotic environment.

There has been a number of staffing changes in the home, and this is detrimental to children's progress and stability. Staff lack understanding and practice experience of children's residential care and child exploitation. The manager does not ensure that the model of therapeutic care used in the home is embedded in staff practice. This means that staff are unable to effectively support children or to minimise the impact that their previous experiences and trauma has on their progress.

Children's moves into the home are planned and their wishes and feelings influence decisions about their care. For one child, when their well-being and safety could not be assured, leaders and managers took the decision to end their placement. However, when no suitable placement was identified within the allotted time frame, the result was that the child lost their home with immediate effect without their involvement or knowledge. The manager failed to inform the local authority where the home is located that a child had moved out of the home. Furthermore, the child's case files and documents are not adequately archived.

Children have individualised education timetables. One child is making progress in education and is planning to complete their GCSE's. These qualifications will enable them to enrol on their chosen further education course. However, for another child, their revised timetable means that they are only able to attend school outside of usual school hours. This means that the child does not have a positive school experience or receive the education that they need. As a result, the child is making little progress. The school is owned by the provider, and the manager has advocated for the child and challenged the educational plan to ensure that the child receives the education that they require.

Staff support and encourage children to attend their routine health appointments, such as visiting the dentist and opticians. Nevertheless, children's traumatic backgrounds impact on their physical and emotional health and well-being. The dynamics in the home and the relationships that children have with each other and with staff also impact on their mental health. This prevents the children making good progress.

Improvements to the home make it a more welcoming environment for children. Nevertheless, some areas of the home, including the kitchen and bathroom, require repair and redecoration.

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

Children are at significant risk when they go missing from this home. There are detailed missing-from-home plans that provide direction to the staff. When a child is attempting to go missing, or is missing from the home, the staff work in partnership with other agencies and children's families to ensure their safe return. However, shortfalls in staff practice and a lack of effective risk management increase the risk to children. For example, a child has gained access to the staff office and the home's mobile phones on three separate occasions.

There have been occasions when staff have been hesitant to welcome children back into the home. On one recent occasion, this response resulted in a vulnerable child leaving a place of safety and security and reverting to being missing from home.

Children are not protected from harm. Children's risk of serious harm has increased because of staff misconduct. On three occasions, a child was able to access a mobile phone. This enabled the child to access social media sites and to contact unauthorised people who were instrumental in facilitating the child going missing from home. Being missing from home placed the child at a significant risk of exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, the manager did not reflect on the first occasion when the child was able to access a mobile phone and, therefore, they did not take effective action to prevent a reoccurrence.

Staff do not consistently follow safeguarding procedures. There has been an incident when a child was injured by an agency member of staff. This injury was the result of an unlawful and unnecessary physical restraint. Staff witnessing this event did not report or record this incident to senior leaders or managers. Consequently, despite hurting the child, this agency member of staff continued to work in this home for a further three days. This impacts on children's sense of safety and their protection.

The home has not been maintained to protect children from potential hazards. For example, a shard of broken glass was found in a child's bedroom bin, an inadequate lock was fitted to a toilet door, the office fire door was damaged, a telephone cable had exposed wires and there was excessive storage of paper files. These shortfalls have the potential to place children and staff at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Staff misconduct is evident and this impacts on the protection and well-being of children. Practice boundaries are blurred by the manager. For example, there have been occasions when she has directed staff to use their own mobile phones, when this practice is clearly outside of procedural guidance. In asking staff to go against internal procedures, the manager gave no consideration to the potential impact on the staff or children.

Professional boundaries have not been upheld by staff. A staff member has slept in a communal lounge area of the home, despite a spare bedroom being available. The manager did not challenge this breach of safe working boundaries. The manager had no regard to the potential impact that the staff's action had on the safety and well-being of children.

Ineffective monitoring and a lack of professional curiosity mean that the manager does not have sufficient oversight of the home. There is no verification of new employees' learning and development to ensure that they understand the children's needs and risks. There are also delays in staff receiving guidance and training to address identified shortfalls in their practice. This is detrimental to children's day-to-day experiences.

Insufficient staffing levels mean that staff are unable to effectively de-escalate incidents in a timely manner. This has resulted in a child being physically harmed. The manager did not make sure that staffing levels were increased after a child's move from the home was delayed. This resulted in an altercation between two children. One child was physically injured and the other was at risk of receiving a criminal conviction.

Staff retention and recruitment are ongoing areas for development and, as a result, the manager employs agency staff in the home. Although the manager has recruitment profiles for these agency staff, there are shortfalls in the recruitment checks for some individual agency staff regarding incomplete overseas checks.

Furthermore, leaders and managers do not ensure that the induction process for new staff sufficiently equips these staff to deliver care and support to children that reflect the therapeutic parenting approach as outlined in the statement of purpose. This means that the home is not able to meet the objectives as set out in the statement of purpose. This is misleading to placing authorities and means that children are admitted to the home even though their needs cannot be met.

The manager recognises the importance of effective communication with other agencies and how this supports children's progress. Feedback from professionals indicates that communication is good and that the manager shares pertinent information.

Three of the four requirements made at the interim inspection in November 2021 have not been met. Further requirements are raised as a result of this full inspection.

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
Any person who carries on or manages an establishment or agency of any description without being registered under this Part in respect of it (as an establishment or, as the case may be, agency of that description) shall be guilty of an offence. (Section 11 (1) Care Standards Act 2000)	4 July 2022
<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>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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</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>	12 June 2022

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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d))	
<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 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;</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; and</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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))</p>	12 June 2022
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(b))</p>	12 June 2022
<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p>	12 June 2022

<p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or</p> <p>a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home.</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))</p>	
<p>Case records must be kept—</p> <p>in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (2)(d))</p>	12 June 2022
<p>The registered person must notify, without delay, the local authority for the area in which the children's home is located of every admission of a child into the home and every discharge of a child from the home. (Regulation 41 (1))</p>	12 June 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that is maintained to an acceptable standard to meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1159397

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: Mark Ullah

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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