

1240802

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. It is a specialist home for children at risk of exploitation. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 18 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/02/2023	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection there have been improvements to the physical environment of the home. The previous damage has been repaired and downstairs is more homely and welcoming for children. However, there are several empty, locked rooms and few personal possessions are on display to show that the child lives here. There are no photos of the child on show although there are empty frames waiting to be filled.

One child is living at the home and is starting to develop positive relationships with staff. Since being here, they have been missing on one occasion. This is a significant reduction from her previous missing behaviour. The child was attending school, completed a functional skills qualification and her attendance at school significantly improved for a short period. However, daily planners show limited educational activities on offer while she is on study leave. Plans are in place to support her into work, but these are in the early stages, and it is difficult to see what is being done to encourage her learning.

Children are involved in decisions such as meal planning and choosing activities. However, children's plans do not provide good-quality and interesting activities. On occasions, necessary health appointments are recorded as the only activity for the day. Staff have identified that worrying incidents reduce when the children have been busy all day, but little is done to actively encourage exciting activities. Structure to the child's day is lacking, and this limits their childhood experiences.

Open conversations take place with children about sexual health. A folder is available for children to access which includes information on contraception and chlamydia testing. Advice on sexual hygiene is not written in an age-appropriate way. This could be confusing for children, giving unclear messages to children who are particularly vulnerable. Messages to children about consent lack clarity, and while a programme about healthy relationships is being planned, it has not yet been delivered.

Specialist support is arranged for children, and they benefit from the in-house therapy that is provided for children or staff to access. This assists staff to better meet the needs of the children.

Planning for children moving into the home is thorough and thoughtful. Children are actively involved in how the home is furnished, in particular in how new children's bedrooms are decorated.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There have been significant incidents when children have been at risk of, or experienced, harm. This includes five occasions when children have barricaded themselves in rooms, which has been an ongoing concern at this home. On occasions, children have been in their rooms for long periods when staff have not been able to get them out, leaving children at serious risk. On one occasion, children were left for 10 hours before the manager arrived and was successful at getting them out. Work to try alternatives is lacking.

Plans for children identify their risks. It is not always clear to staff which policy should be prioritised and specific details are missing, for example, how a child should keep in contact with staff during their free time and how often. For one child, this was clarified with a written agreement but was not detailed in their support plan. This does not provide important clarity for children and staff.

Missing-from-home processes are clear, and incidents are generally recorded well. Staff are proactive in looking for children and build relationships with known friends or their parents to reduce risks. Conversations take place with staff and children after they have gone missing to understand these incidents and help to prevent them.

Two serious incidents have occurred in which children have experienced harm. The immediate responses of the manager were quick and creative. When there have been shortfalls in practice, there has been a lack of scrutiny about staff action in relation to the wider incident, for example, whether staff responding differently at an earlier stage could have resulted in a different outcome.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home now benefits from a registered manager being in post. Staff say they are highly supported and feel valued. The manager knows the children well and advocates for them with other professionals. The manager is proactive about planning staff training and organised specific training to meet one child's needs before they moved in.

When there were concerns about a member of staff, the manager put support in place, with clear actions and timeframes for training, shadowing and mentoring. Staff also benefit from clinical support, which is offered routinely and following significant incidents.

Reflection takes place in supervisions and with the team as a whole. The learning from one child's placement was considered in depth, with each team member reflecting on this. The manager explores why incidents occur and why children might display certain behaviours. The effectiveness of plans and staff action lacks critical questioning. When one child's placement ended, there was acknowledgement that the home could not keep the child safe. However, the wider theme of repeated placements ending was not considered.

Care is reviewed with external professionals and there is evidence of challenge to ensure children's needs are met. Work to improve relationships with professionals is limited, for

example, discussions have not taken place with the police after they attended the home armed or in riot vans. A visit from the police had been arranged for the day of the inspection, however, these conversations did not happen in a timely way to support children.

External scrutiny is provided through monthly visits from the independent visitor. However, there is a lack of challenge from the manager about the absence in the independent visitor's reports of conversations with children and external feedback from others involved in children's lives, which does not drive improvement.

Effective safer recruitment processes are in place, which reduce the risk of unsuitable people working in the 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, 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 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— 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>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, action must be taken to safeguard children. Staff must ensure that children are not left for long periods barricaded in their bedrooms and all attempts should be made to prevent room barricading. Safeguarding processes must be robust and followed at all times.</p>	<p>19 July 2024</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>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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))</p> <p>In particular, children’s plans must be clear in respect of any boundaries or restrictions so children and staff know what is expected of them. In addition, the manager must have systems in place to review how effective care has been so that improvements can be made.</p>	<p>30 August 2024</p>
<p>The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</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;</p> <p>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and</p>	<p>30 August 2024</p>

<p>understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, advice and support to children about sexual health must be age appropriate, recognise the age of consent and provide clear guidance.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and</p> <p>to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home’s records (except for a child’s case records, unless the child and the child’s placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.</p> <p>A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person’s report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being.</p> <p>The independent person’s report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))</p> <p>In particular, the independent visitor’s reports must be used by the manager to review care and drive improvement. The manager should ensure that feedback from external professionals, family and the children, where appropriate, is obtained and used to strengthen and improve the home.</p>	<p>30 August 2024</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff support the child to sustain or regain their confidence in education and engage them in suitable structured activities. In particular, when the child is not at school, they should be offered, and encouraged to take part in, suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)

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: 1240802

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Danielle Ross

Registered manager: Laura Hutson

Inspector

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

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