

1227060

Cambian Autism Services Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is made up of separate houses in the grounds of a residential special school. Both the school and home are owned by a private company. There were four houses providing residential care at the time of the monitoring visit.

The children are placed by various local authorities from across the United Kingdom. Their residential placements are for 38 or 52 weeks of the year. The school also caters for day pupils. The children may have learning disabilities and/or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. They all have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

The home has been without a registered manager since July 2019. An appointed manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 29 March 2021

This monitoring visit

Ofsted has paused assurance visits at this time as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. This monitoring visit was carried out in response to information shared with Ofsted. The focus of this visit was to review complaints and significant incidents, specifically those where physical restraint was used to manage children's behaviours.

Ofsted last inspected this home on 21 May 2019 and completed a full inspection. This home had an assurance visit on 9 September 2020. Regulatory shortfalls were identified during the assurance visit and requirements were raised.

This monitoring visit was carried out on site. The visit included the review of documents, interviews with the manager, staff and relevant professionals, and discussions with children and their families.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans do not provide staff with the necessary guidance to help them to support children who are in crisis. This is a particular risk when children are left alone to self-regulate. Although staff talk about how their actions protect children in these situations, their recordings of these incidents lack detail and do not provide sufficient insight into the steps taken or the effectiveness of these. The manager does not routinely review the children's plans or incident reports. This means that it is not known whether staff actions reduce risks to children's safety and whether children's welfare is always being promoted and safeguarded by the staff.

Staff do not consistently follow the children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans. This places children at risk of significant harm. On one occasion, staff lost sight of a child as they were called to help protect another child. This practice was not in line with the first child's plan. The manager did not review this incident to improve staff safeguarding practice.

Children require a lot of support and some children are often anxious; they experience periods of crisis. Some staff are not trained in behaviour management and physical restraint and are unable to safely protect themselves, the children or others. Items that can cause harm, such as craft tools, are not always safely stored away. Some incidents might have been avoided, had such items not been available to children. When staff use physical restraint to manage children's behaviours, the manager does not consistently carry out debriefs. This means that the manager does not fully review these incidents to ensure that staff practice protects children from harm.

Complaints have been raised about the conduct of staff. Although the manager has responded appropriately to these complaints, the recorded reflections are brief and do not fully focus on the child's experience. Consequently, the manager's review of staff practice development is limited, with no evidence of a suitable action plan to ensure that staff practice improves.

To mitigate staffing shortages, the manager has covered shifts on the rota. This impacts on the time available for her to monitor, review and quality-assure care practices. Furthermore, staff shortages have led to children being cared for by staff who are unfamiliar to them. This has led to complaints by staff and contributes to the children feeling unsettled.

External monitoring of this home does not provide an overarching view of the children's journey and significant events. Although monitoring reports are routinely completed, the level of consultation with children and others is inconsistent. The independent visitor continues to undertake visits remotely despite this flexibility being removed from the regulations. Their reports do not reflect the environment in which the children live. The home presents as institutional, with a lack of homeliness. This does not support children's development.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Good
29/01/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/11/2018	Full	Inadequate

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
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))	9 May 2021
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	9 May 2021

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(f)(h))	
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— 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 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. 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— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b))	31 May 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children living there. While the home must comply with relevant health and safety legislation, it should, as far as possible, provide a homely, domestic environment rather than an 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1227060

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Phipps

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector
Louise Hollick, Her Majesty's inspector

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