

1230416

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to four children who may have experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable. Education is offered at a linked provision on a different site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

There has been no registered manager in post since December 2023.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 23 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2024	Full	Good
11/10/2022	Full	Outstanding
04/01/2022	Full	Good
10/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on and one child has moved in. The shortfalls identified in the leadership and management of the home have affected children's experiences. At times, the staff have failed to provide safe or effective care. This has resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate.

One child spoke to the inspector during this inspection.

There has not been enough consideration about whether children's needs can be met by the staff. Despite having no manager, and a very inexperienced staff team, a new child moved in to live with a child who was settled. This resulted in several incidents that disrupted both children and left them unsafe.

Some consequences that staff use to manage children's behaviour are punitive. This does not help children to understand their behaviour or learn from this. The staff have failed to engage children in education or structured activities. The children have poor sleep hygiene. When children are not up in the morning, staff threaten to remove purposeful activities. This has left children with poor routines and little to do. These factors have contributed to unstable relationships between staff and children.

One child's bedroom had plates, cups and rubbish on the floor. The child's bed had white sheets that appeared heavily soiled with red and brown stains. The staff have failed to provide a hygienic, clean bedroom. This does not support children's well-being.

Staff carry out room searches when they have concerns about children's safety and well-being. However, the staff do not seek permission from children before searching their bedrooms. Although there are occasions when an immediate room search may be necessary, the staff have failed to provide a rationale for searching children's bedrooms without their permission.

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

Staff have not followed agreed strategies when monitoring and supervising children. The staff have failed to report incidents, using the emergency on-call arrangements. These shortfalls have led to delayed responses by leaders and managers. These delays have increased the risk of harm to children.

Staff said that they cannot keep children safe because there are not enough staff and most experienced staff have left. Staff work long hours and appear depleted and tired. This compromises their judgement and ability to provide children with safe care.

There have been incidents of children going missing from the home. When children go missing, staff are quick to respond. Partnership work with the police is effective and staff actively ensure that the children return home as soon as possible. However, children are not offered return home interviews. This means that opportunities are missed to understand why children go missing and to reduce these incidents.

A child told the inspector that they were worried about a staff member returning to the home. This was because the child had raised concerns about the member of staff. The child was not kept up to date or reassured about this situation. When this was raised during the inspection, the staff reassured the child.

The safe recruitment systems for staff are comprehensive. This helps to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home does not have a registered manager or consistent arrangements to oversee the day-to-day management of the home. This has resulted in very poor managerial monitoring and oversight. Several managers have supported the home and carried out audits. These audits have been ineffective as identified shortfalls have not been addressed in a timely manner and children have been left at risk.

One safeguarding concern relating to poor staff practice that left children at risk of harm was not notified to Ofsted. This meant that Ofsted's capacity to monitor safeguards was reduced. The staff have failed to notify all relevant professionals following a serious allegation of abuse from a child about a staff member. Combined, these failures remove the safeguards and systems intended to keep vulnerable children safe.

The management of the home fails to support the approach and ethos described in the statement of purpose. Leaders and managers are ineffective in overseeing staff practice to enable them to deliver consistent and safe care. Staff do not receive regular supervision sessions to support their development and reflect on their practice.

Staff undertake the organisation's training and induction programme. However, poor staff retention and difficulties in staff recruitment have left an inexperienced staff team. This means that children have not been supported by staff who have the experience and skills to meet their individual needs.

The staff have faced difficult situations and challenges. Despite this, there are no records of team meetings to ensure that staff use incidents to reduce risks for children and improve their experiences. Staff morale is low. Staff said that they do not feel supported because the home does not have a manager. Furthermore, leaders and managers have not reviewed incidents and consequences to identify any learning.

Leaders and managers have sustained positive relationships with professionals. The feedback about effective communication is mixed. One child's parent said, 'Things had gone downhill in the last three to four months and communication from staff was poor.'

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
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff understand their roles in safeguarding and supervising children and implement the home's safeguarding policies, including reporting safeguarding concerns to relevant professionals.	12 August 2024
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—	12 August 2024

understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(v)(vii)) In particular, ensure that children's bedrooms are clean, well maintained and provide a safe and homely personal space.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	12 August 2024
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, appoint a suitable manager and ensure that they register with Ofsted without delay. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	2 September 2024

*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 has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(d))	12 August 2024
*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— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(e))	12 August 2024
*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—	12 August 2024

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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular; ensure there are adequate staff that have the skills, experiences and qualifications to meet the assessed needs of the children. ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding of the risks to keep children safe. ensure that all incidents and consequences given to children are reviewed to evaluate the impact on children and where possible inform future practice and reduce the risks of harm to children.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, ensure that all staff receive practice-related supervision sessions that include staff well-being.	12 August 2024

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Information provided by such interviews should be considered when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. In particular, the registered person should ensure that children are routinely offered return home interviews after missing-from-care incidents. The interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that children's bedrooms are only searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the

child's or another person's safety or well-being. In particular, the registered person should ensure that when children's bedrooms are searched without the children's permission, staff state the reason why they have not sought permission from children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20)

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: 1230416

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: Dennise Springett

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anver Rose, Social Care Inspector

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