

1235818

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

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 provider. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since March 2024.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. The inspector spoke with the children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 6 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2024	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
01/02/2022	Full	Good
01/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home, together with staff's poor safeguarding practice, have had an impact on the overall experiences of children.

Children's views regarding the quality of care that they receive varies. For example, one child said that there is a lack of food in the home and did not feel safe because of the damage that had occurred at the home. Children also expressed that they are not able to have private phone conversations with their friends and family. Furthermore, children expressed that they do not have anyone that they are able to confide in.

Managers and staff say that they support the children to share their views directly with them and they make efforts to address their concerns. However, these worries are still being expressed by children and have not been properly resolved for them. This does not enable the children to feel confident that their views are being listened to.

Children have overhead staff discussions, particularly about financial matters. For example, children say that they have not been able to do an activity because of insufficient funds. Furthermore, children report that they must pay for staff to attend activities with the money that they earn as rewards. Children say that they would rather not have any activities as a result. This affects how children view relationships in the home, how they understand some aspects of their care and does not make the children feel valued in their home.

Children have personalised care plans. Staff understand children's needs and how they should be helped and supported. Children develop independence skills according to their needs and abilities. One child has been promoted to pursue an apprenticeship in catering and the child is given opportunities to cook at home, which they enjoy. Staff celebrate children's achievements, and this helps them to stay motivated to achieve better success.

Children make good progress in education. Three children have completed GCSE examinations and they have been accepted into further education. Managers are ambitious for children and they work well with the home's school staff. When children are not in school, staff encourage children to engage in meaningful activities. This ensures that children continue to learn.

Children spend time with their family and people who matter the most to them. A parent spoke positively of the care and support that staff provide and how family time is prioritised. When family time has not gone well, staff support the child to communicate their views to professionals. This helps children to enjoy positive relationships.

The children's home is spacious, and children have access to most areas of the home. However, some areas of the home are cluttered and carpets are not clean. One vacant bedroom is unhygienic and unsafe and has graffiti on the furniture, walls and ceilings. This was a child's way of expressing their emotions. However, staff have not fully considered the words of the child, and the bedroom has not been redecorated to avoid this being seen by the other children. The cleaning routines in place have been poor and detract from the otherwise homeliness of the environment.

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

The home's statement of purpose outlines that staff provide care for children who have experienced child sexual exploitation. Staff do not demonstrate professional curiosity and did not report their concerns to managers about a child's new relationship. Furthermore, staff missed opportunities to speak to the child to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe. This absence of work and failure to act put a child at risk of harm.

There has been an increase in periods when children struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour. Staff provide children with help and support and understand the children's trauma responses. Additionally, staff use de-escalation techniques to prevent a crisis. However, some children say that they are affected by these incidents. Staff do not accept that children are affected by some of the events in the home, whereas one child said that they do not feel their worries are acknowledged by staff. This does not create a sense of nurturing and safety for all children.

Risks to the children are known. Risk assessments completed prior to children coming to live in the home are clear about the actions required to mitigate the risks. Despite this, staff do not follow the agreed actions to guard against online harm. For example, one child was allowed to use a mobile phone which did not have parent-shield locks. This does not keep children safe from online abuse and exploitation.

Leaders and managers promote a restorative approach to parenting. When children receive consequences in response to negative and unwanted behaviours, staff explain sensitively the reasons for the actions. When consequences are given by other relevant professionals and they have the potential to disrupt essential parts of the child's care plan, managers advocate for the child by escalating these worries. This helps the children to feel valued and protected.

Children currently living in the home said that they are safe. Some children are happy to participate and learn from the discussions undertaken by staff to help them understand about sexual harm and exploitation. For those children who struggle to talk about their experiences, staff maintain positive relationships with relevant safeguarding professionals who offer specialist support when it is required.

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

A registered manager has not yet been appointed to the home. Management oversight has been provided by people including the deputy manager. Staff and the children speak positively about the support they receive from the deputy manager and team leaders.

The deputy manager has a good understanding of the children's needs, and she understands the home's strengths and areas for development. Management monitoring systems have not been effective. For example, not all staff have received regular supervision sessions, children's behaviour management plans need to be reviewed and housekeeping routines have not had strong management oversight. Managers have not challenged effectively placing authorities for key records, such as the outcome of a strategy discussion. This does not inform urgent actions for staff to take, or information to update risk assessments.

Staff have not clearly articulated or made a proper record of a whistle-blowing complaint. Staff have not followed the recording policy, which has prevented appropriate actions being taken in a timely manner.

The home has been affected by poor staffing levels. However, staff have additional support from the clinical team, which offers consultations to help staff to understand the children's behaviours and how to respond appropriately. This helps the staff to support children to manage their emotions better.

Staff say they have reflective supervision sessions. However, staff have not always had the chance to receive regular supervision. Team meetings take place regularly and staff also attend meetings to discuss the children. Feedback from children's meetings helps professionals to understand the views, wishes and feelings of the children. This helps staff and professionals to keep the children at the forefront of their care arrangements.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered person should support staff to reflect on the views of the children and evaluate the quality of care provided and take appropriate action.	2 December 2024
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust;	2 December 2024

an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; and are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(vi)(viii)(ix)(x))	
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; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi))	2 December 2024

In particular, take action to reduce the risk of harm when evidence suggests that a child may be at risk of exploitation. In addition, when risk of exploitation is indicated, the registered person should ensure that staff talk to children and update risk assessments.	
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; 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 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)(d)(f)(h)) In particular, to ensure that reviewing systems and case records are kept up to date. Furthermore, staff should ensure that the children's bedrooms are nurturing environments that meet the needs of the children.	2 December 2024

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 Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Mark Ullah

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tenji Wesa, Social Care Inspector

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