

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	31/01/2017
Unique reference number	1236026
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Cambian Childcare Ltd
Registered provider address	4th Floor, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment, London W6 9RU

Responsible individual	Ian Raine
Registered manager	Daniel Johns
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	31/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	First inspection, none since registration
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1236026

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff provide high quality individual support to young people. They advocate strongly on their behalf, enabling them to access education and training opportunities which would otherwise be denied to them.
- Relationships between staff and young people are excellent. Young people trust staff to help them fulfil their aspirations. Staff listen to young people, help them talk through any worries and encourage them to make informed choices.
- Programmes of care are clear in setting out what staff must do to help young people make progress. Staff manage transitions into and out of the home sensitively and with due regard for young people's emotions, even when the circumstances are difficult.
- Staff work well with other professionals. This ensures that young people are given consistent messages about their plans for the future and how they will be achieved. Staff also establish good partnerships with parents. This often helps them to repair fractured relationships with their children.
- Young people are, and feel, safe. Risky behaviours such as going missing or misusing substances have reduced. The work of staff has enabled young people who were subject to exploitation less vulnerable to this risk. Staff manage challenging behaviour with skill and patience.
- The registered manager provides sound leadership, inspiring his team to place the welfare and safety of young people at the heart of their work. There are some minor shortfalls in practice but these do not significantly affect the good service the home provides.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to managing the risks associated with access to social media, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(i) 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.	25/02/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17 paragraph 3.27)
- Staff should be 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)
- Ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment. Specifically, that young people are not required to sign documents such as sanction records ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page

15 paragraph 3.9)

- Ensure that staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61 paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection since it was registered on 07/05/2016.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff have a thorough knowledge of the young people's needs and the level of support they need to help them make progress. Care plans are detailed, containing the objectives of each young person's placement and what action is needed to meet them. Some care plans, however, need greater attention by staff. In several instances, sections from other plans have been copied and pasted, reducing the plan's relevance and accuracy. Staff and young people enjoy excellent relationships. Sometimes, young people are reluctant to do something, such as get up for college. In these situations staff are persistent, using humour and good-natured encouragement to achieve the desired outcome. It is clear that young people trust the staff to act in their best interests and speak up on their behalf. On occasion, staff have arranged for an independent advocate to represent a young person who is disagreement with the local authority's plan for them. Staff are consistent in stressing to young people the importance of education. A recent innovation is the appointment of a member of staff with particular responsibility for liaising with education and training providers and local employers. This has been instrumental in ensuring that all young people have some kind of programme in place, a particularly noteworthy achievement considering that most have had little or no consistent education prior to coming here. One young person has just started an apprenticeship, getting up early every morning to make the long journey to work. Another, who has left the home, told the inspector: 'Staff are great. They got me through my GCSEs and I wouldn't have done that without them. They were so encouraging. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be in sixth form.' Staff give priority to the importance of young people's views. They listen to what young people have to say and respect their opinions even if they don't agree with them. Where it is not possible to act on a young person's wishes, staff take the time to explain why. This approach enhances young people's sense of self-worth, and means that they understand that what they think matters. A young person said: 'We had an issue with the food, so we brought it up in the young people's meeting and now it's sorted.' The home provides a range of activities which are stimulating and enjoyable, and give young people the opportunity for different experiences. Last summer they holidayed in Lanzarote, and recently they went on a trip to London. The registered manager contacted the local MP who escorted the group around the House of Commons. The young people thoroughly enjoyed watching a debate in the	

chamber.

Life in the home helps young people to practise the skills they will need as adults. For example, staff support them in cooking meals and encourage them to look after their rooms and do their washing. However, there is a lack of formality and structure around this work, meaning that planning to ensure that young people are prepared for independence is weak.

Staff develop good relationships with young people's families. They are committed to supporting and facilitating contact, driving young people considerable distances to see those people who are important to them. Staff are good at helping young people and their parents to reconcile their differences and rebuild their relationships. This will be important for young people in helping them make the transition into adulthood as well as reinforcing their sense of identity.

Transitions out of the home are managed well. Even when such a move is difficult, for example, at short notice due to safeguarding issues, staff are sensitive to the feelings of the young person. One young person said: 'I had to move out of the home suddenly, this was due to my behaviour, but staff handled it really well. They were really supportive.'

The home is extremely well-maintained, spacious and comfortable. Staff understand the anxiety that young people have when they first arrive and go out of their way to welcome them. A social worker said: 'I'm really impressed with the home. Staff and young people gave the young person a great welcome when I brought him for the first time. This has helped him to settle in.' The homely feel that staff create is at odds with the unnecessary and institutional practice of requiring young people to sign documents such as pocket money and sanction records.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff have a detailed knowledge of each young person's history, particularly in relation to any risk-taking behaviour. This enables them to put in place comprehensive plans which set out strategies to minimise any threats to the young person. One risk assessment had not been updated following an incident, which means that staff may not have been aware of the current circumstances and what is needed to keep the young person safe. Young people feel safe here. One said: 'Staff keep us safe and look after us the best they can.' A social worker remarked: 'As far as safeguarding goes, the staff	

are doing a fantastic job. Prior to the young person coming here he was always going missing, and there was a lot of substance misuse. Both of these issues have reduced to zero.'

In other respects, staff manage the safeguarding of young people extremely well. They balance the need to act as good parents, by placing restrictions on the movements of some young people, with the need to promote their independence and their right to make their own choices. This approach is helped by the good relationships that staff have with young people. They encourage young people to talk to them about what they are doing, where they are going and who they are seeing. A social worker said of a young person: 'He has told me that staff do not judge him, and that this is a safe place where he can talk about his feelings candidly to staff and they will listen.' Young people have developed trust in staff to the extent that they will show them their social networking activity on their mobiles. This enables staff to talk about safe behaviour online and the potential for harm, which is inherent in online activity. As a result of the committed and proactive work of staff in this area, young people who were classified as at high risk of exploitation have had this risk reduced. There is a need, however, for written assessments in relation to the use of social media to reflect more accurately the daily practice of staff in managing this risk.

Staff have been successful in reducing the number of incidents when young people go missing. One young person, who was missing from his previous placement for 65% of the time, has not gone missing for over two months. No other young people have gone missing in that time. This improvement is partly because young people enjoy living here so much, but also because of the care with which staff plan their free time. Young people are allowed unsupervised time out of the home in accordance with their plan, but are contacted by staff both by phone and in person at regular intervals. This enables young people to socialise within the community and reduce their desire to go missing.

Staff are skilled in managing challenging behaviour. They respond with patience, tolerance and skill. They look beneath a young person's presenting behaviour and try to understand the emotions which are causing them to behave as they are. This enables staff to tease out with the young person what they are feeling, and different ways that they might deal with their distress or anger. As a result, the use of physical restraint is rare, and the need to apply sanctions for poor behaviour has reduced. Staff would rather reward young people for their positive actions, and ask them to make reparation if they have damaged something.

	Judgement grade
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The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He leads the staff team effectively, ensuring that staff practice is consistently professional and focused on the welfare and safety of young people. He does this not only by spending a good deal of his time working directly with young people, but also delivering bespoke training to the team in staff meetings. A social worker said: 'I am very impressed with the quality of care. The manager is very supportive. He has invested in the children heavily and works hard to make sure that they are comfortable and safe. He and the rest of the staff have a real can-do attitude.' Staff are proud to commit themselves to young people even in the face of extremely challenging behaviour. This provides stability for young people and the knowledge that staff will not easily give up on them. One social worker said: 'The young person initially was very disruptive here. They caused a lot of damage. They were moved on from other homes for this behaviour, but not here. The staff have real stickability.' Staff are thoroughly vetted at the recruitment stage, ensuring that only people who are suitable to work with young people are employed. They are supported through a comprehensive induction and receive training in a wide range of areas. This is refreshed at appropriate intervals. In addition, staff receive regular one-to-one supervision. This does, however, tend to focus on performance management rather than encouraging reflection on the member of staff's practice. Visits by an independent person provide assurance that the home is continuing to support young people effectively and promote their welfare. In addition, the registered manager's own monitoring identifies areas for development, and makes use of the views of young people and other users of the service. The registered manager and staff have good relationships with other agencies and professionals. They are assertive in challenging when the contribution of another service falls short of what is required. They also challenge unfair assumptions made by others about the young people such as, for example, that they might cause trouble in the community. The registered manager has made links with the parish council and is due to attend their next meeting. This will help to confront any prejudice and ensure good working relationships in future.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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