

2534827

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children aged between 11 and 18 with complex needs. It is one of a group of homes run by a large independent provider.

The organisation has its own school off site, which the children attend. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager left on 8 August 2024. The home currently has no manager in post.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 October 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: 16 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	Full	Good
26/05/2022	Full	Good
04/08/2021	Full	Good
26/11/2019	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, six children have moved into the home and four children have moved out. At the time of the inspection, one child was present and was spoken with. Another child was missing and had been missing for over three weeks.

All children have education places. The progress children make in education is variable. One child was making progress and had good attendance. This child's progress has dipped since the manager left in August 2024. This child is missing from the home and professionals say that the child does not want to return to the home.

Children's records do not consistently reflect the work that has been completed by staff. Children's experiences and their involvement in care planning are not always clear. Additionally, children's files do not contain all the up-to-date information to support staff to meet children's needs. For example, two children's case files did not have up-to-date local authority plans.

Children's endings are not always positive. Leaders and managers decided to end two children's placements quickly because they could not assure the children's safety and well-being. This meant that staff were unable to support the children effectively.

Staff do not ensure that children have photos that they can take with them when they move on. Staff did not complete a scrapbook for one child, who recently left the home. This meant that the child left the home with no photos of their positive memories.

The staff and the managers have not put in appropriate routines and boundaries for the children. As a result, children are not achieving good outcomes and their episodes of going missing in the night are leaving them vulnerable. The staff are trying their best to support the children, but so far this has been unsuccessful.

Painters were redecorating the entrance and hallway during the inspection. Although the communal areas of the home are well presented, one child's bedroom was not maintained to an acceptable standard. There is a plan to address this. However, the child had been missing from the home for three weeks and no repairs had taken place.

Children take part in activities such as going to the zoo, horse-riding lessons and going to theme parks.

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

Staff hold one-to-one sessions to help children to understand their behaviours. In addition, the clinical therapist holds sessions with children. However, this is not a

consistent practice. There are times when staff lack professional curiosity and fail to ensure that children have the required support. For example, when children were having difficulties with their bedtime routine, the staff did not support children to learn about healthy bedtime routines, or find out why children did not want to settle. Consequences were put in place, which did not help the children's routines. Management oversight failed to notice that these consequences were not restorative, which meant that bedtimes continued to be a problem.

Several documents such as daily logs, behavioural incidents and other incidents are difficult to comprehend due to poor formatting and handwriting.

It is unclear whether follow-up discussions take place with children about why they should not have items such as vapes.

When children go missing from the home, staff generally follow the agreed protocols including working with the police. Staff keep chronologies of the actions that they take during the missing-from-care episode and the work completed with the child. Return home interviews with children are provided by external professionals. On one occasion, when a staff member did not follow the missing-from-care protocol, the managers followed this up very quickly and ensured that extra support was put in for staff on managing these incidents. One child is still missing from the home and it is unclear where this child is. The manager and the local authority have regular meetings about this child.

Physical intervention records are poorly written and are not easy to read. They lack important information such as what holds were used. The management oversight is not effective. On two of the records, the managers who were involved in the intervention also had management oversight. Debriefs are held and children are consulted. However, due to the format of the records, it is unclear whether these conversations are reflective or effective.

Risk assessments capture the changing dynamics for each child. However, for some new behaviours, there are no control measures for staff to follow. This means that staff are not fully equipped with all the necessary strategies to meet the children's needs.

Two parents and four professionals gave feedback to say that they do not feel that children's needs are being met. They believe that this is because of the high staff turnover and change of manager.

When children make allegations, the managers act quickly to remove the staff member. Detailed investigations take place. There is effective partnership working between the managers, local authority designated officer and the police.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in the management team. The registered manager left in August 2024. The home has been overseen by the responsible individual and two deputy managers and support is received from other managers in the organisation. A new manager was recruited, and recruitment checks were carried out, but the manager did not start in post. A temporary manager has been appointed while the provider recruits for a permanent manager.

The retention of staff has been problematic. Since the last inspection in May 2023, 17 staff members have left and 18 new staff have joined. In response, the managers and leaders have reflected on this to help them to understand the reasons for staff leaving. The high turnover of staff does not provide consistency for children.

The staff team is new and, although staff are enthusiastic, they lack experience and knowledge of residential childcare. Various staff members said they feel supported by some managers, but they emphasised the importance of having experienced senior staff to support them.

Staff spoke of their concerns about inconsistency in the staff team and managers and the lack of teamwork. This has led to staff morale being low.

Changes in interim management arrangements meant that a quality of care report was not completed in line with expected timescales. The management audits failed to spot this. This means that managers and staff have not had the opportunity to formally reflect on the quality of care experienced by the children.

Previously, supervisions were not purposeful or consistently taking place. For the past three months, these have been taking place regularly and the quality has improved. Discussions about children's progress are now taking place.

Six requirements and four recommendations have been raised.

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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(d)) In particular, that any damage to children's bedrooms is repaired quickly and that staff provide consistent responses to children.	29 November 2024
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, that children's plans and records reflect changes in behaviour and any updated strategies.	29 November 2024
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—	29 November 2024

the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)) In particular, that physical intervention records are legible and that they state the duration and description of the hold used and detail any method used to avoid the measure.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	30 December 2024
The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that—	29 November 2024

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b) (3)(b))	
In particular, that staff have the relevant experience and skills to meet children's needs.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. (Regulation 45 (1))	29 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, they should ensure that all records are clear and up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand their important role in encouraging children to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of their time spent living at the home and help them to record significant life events. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature. The consequences should help children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 2534827

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: Dennise Springett

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Saeeda Fatima, Social Care Inspector

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