

2550622

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private company. It provides care for up to four children. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Two of them spoke to the inspector about their experiences of living in the home.

The home and manager were registered by Ofsted on 1 June 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 13 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. We had previously visited on 24 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit and on 28 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The reports are published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 September 2021

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Three compliance notices were issued following the assurance visit on 28 October 2020. They related to regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) and regulation 14 (the care planning standard). The monitoring visit, carried out on 24 November 2020, found that the provider had not taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices and new compliance notices were issued.

A further monitoring visit, carried out on 13 January 2021, confirmed that the provider had taken sufficient action to meet the compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

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

This is the first inspection since the home was registered in June 2020. Children say they like living in the home and feel supported by the core staff team. Most of the children have made some progress in comparison to their original starting points.

Children's experiences are not always positive. Shortfalls in staffing mean that children are often cared for by staff who do not know them or the home well, and who do not understand their individual behaviours and triggers. As a result, clear boundaries are not robustly implemented and inconsistent approaches from staff have led to an increased number of incidents in the home.

One child has recently left the service and two children have moved in. These moves were well planned and considered the needs of children already living in the home, alongside the needs of children moving in. However, the considerations did not fully reflect the group dynamics, which has affected the progress made by some children.

Despite attempts to create a warm and welcoming environment for children, some areas of the home appear tired, damaged and are in need of redecoration and repair. One child's bedroom was not personalised, and his bed needed replacing. The manager had taken action to address this, but delays with the supplier meant this was not resolved in a timely manner.

Education is well promoted, and children are supported to attend. However, when children choose not to participate in education, clearer routines and expectations would further strengthen the work the team is doing to encourage attendance.

Children have access to a range of leisure activities. More recently, these have been planned as group activities, which has limited some of the individualised activities for some children. Children feel listened to and have the opportunity to share their views through discussions with staff and managers. Children are included in decisions about the home.

Children's physical and emotional health needs are well understood. Links with routine and specialist health care providers have been developed by the team to ensure that children's individual health needs are being met.

In line with their plans, children's relationships with people who are important to them are supported by the staff team. One child, who is preparing to move on from the home, is being given support to maintain important relationships and links with her hometown. Staff transport her long distances each week, enabling her to see family and access education.

Children are supported to develop basic life skills. In preparation for adulthood, older children are helped to develop independence skills and are given budgets to buy their own groceries.

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

The core staff team understands the children's needs and supports children to develop positive peer relationships and use the internet safely. As a result of strategies suggested by the team, incidents of missing from home have significantly reduced. However, improvements in the monitoring of children's activities during unstructured time would provide clearer indicators of children's vulnerability to criminal exploitation.

Risk and behaviour management plans identify risks and include strategies for staff to follow. However, these are not consistently followed. As a result, there have been several occasions when responses from staff have resulted in incidents escalating and the police being called to manage behaviours. This is not only potentially distressing for children, but it may also result in children being criminalised due to staff not having the skills to respond appropriately to challenging situations.

Physical interventions have been used by staff but they have been ineffective. Debriefs have highlighted how situations could have been avoided with more appropriate responses from staff, and therefore the need to physically restrain a child would have been unnecessary.

Children and staff know how to complain. All allegations have been investigated in line with the provider's safeguarding procedures. Following allegations, the manager ensures that relevant professionals are notified and that there is support in place for children and staff.

A review of staff recruitment confirmed that staff are appointed using safe recruitment practices. This minimises the potential for adults to be employed at the home who may pose a risk to children.

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

The home is managed by a suitably skilled and experienced manager. She is supported by a deputy manager and team leader. Since the monitoring visit in January 2021, there have been significant shortfalls in staffing due to staff being unable to work due to incidents and staff sickness. These shortfalls have affected the consistency and continuity in the home. Efforts are made to cover shortfalls by known bank staff, but this is not always possible, and children are not always cared for by people they know.

The current staffing ratios do not reflect the individual needs and group dynamics of children living in the home. This has not directly affected the care of children but leaves both children and staff vulnerable to potential incidents.

Some incidents have not been managed in line with children's plans. On occasion, the advice given to staff by the provider's on-call management service has led to an escalation in the intensity and duration of incidents. The manager takes action to reflect upon learning from incidents to improve the quality of care provided in the home. However, the effect of this learning is currently limited.

Staff feel supported by the manager. They can see the consistency she is trying to implement and share her frustrations about the effect the lack of a stable team is having on the progress being made in the home. Staff benefit from regular supervision, but recordings do not routinely demonstrate opportunities for reflection or discussions about children.

The staff team has access to a range of training courses, and the manager has identified strategies and additional training to improve staff responses to incidents. These have not yet been implemented.

Not all incidents have been reported to Ofsted as required by regulation. The requirement set at the monitoring visit in January 2021 has not been met and has been repeated.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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— ensure the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to— enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(ii)) This specifically relates to improving the standard of decor and furnishings in the home and ensuring that children's bedrooms are suitably furnished and personalised.	12 November 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;	12 November 2021

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(xi)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff build positive relationships with children, to enable them to meet children's needs in line with their plans and have the ability to manage incidents and group dynamics in the home.	
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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(1)(v)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff remain vigilant to potential risks and understand their role in following children's plans and responding to children's individual behaviours, to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviours in the home.	12 November 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— 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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	12 November 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)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that there are sufficient staff on duty in the home at all times and that there is a suitably skilled, consistent workforce providing continuity of care to each child.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) Part of this requirement ((4)(e)) was made at the last inspection and is restated.	12 November 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children who are not participating in education are engaged in suitably structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of individual activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)

- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision enables staff to reflect and act on how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for and that supervision notes accurately reflect these discussions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)

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: 2550622

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Asjad Mahmood

Registered manager: Amy Condron

Inspector

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

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