

2594007

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private company.

There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection. One child had recently moved out.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2020. The manager is not currently working at the home. An interim manager is in post.

Inspection date: 31 October 2024

Date of last inspection: 20 August 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: Following the inspection on 14 May 2024, compliance notices were issued regarding regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. These compliances were monitored on 4 July 2024, when they were judged to have been met.

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

Following an escalation in serious safeguarding notifications, an assurance inspection was carried out on 31 October 2024.

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Inadequate management arrangements do not safeguard or protect children.
- Staff do not have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm.
- Staff do not recognise the risk of child exploitation.
- Medication is not stored and managed safely.
- Management oversight of incidents and records is poor. Managers do not identify or address shortfalls in staff practice.

Children have been left in dangerous situations which could have been prevented. One child has recently moved out after being left at risk in the community. The child suffered harm and trauma due to poor safeguarding practices.

Staff do not show any curiosity about where children are going or who they are spending time with when out of the home. Staff do not keep in touch with children when they are out. The children's safety is significantly compromised.

When children are missing from home, staff do not follow the missing-from-home protocol. In addition, due to the lack of staff curiosity, they are unable to help police locate children and bring them home safely at the earliest opportunity. One member of staff reported to police that they do not know who any of the child's friends are. As a result, children have experienced significant harm.

When children return home, staff do not always welcome them into the home and make sure that they are safe. On one occasion, one child was able to bring a friend into the home and hide them in their bedroom overnight. This went completely unnoticed by staff, and only came to light when the local authority raised it with them several days later. This compromised the safety of the children.

Leaders and managers do not always review incident records or identify serious shortfalls in staff practice. In addition, when learning is identified it is not shared effectively. This means that children have continued to be left at risk.

Children are not treated with dignity and respect. Staff do not protect children's privacy and fail to consider children's emotional well-being during serious incidents. Staff allowed one child to witness a sensitive and traumatic incident involving another child. Staff did not consider the impact that this could have on both of the

children. In addition, children are not always offered an opportunity to reflect after traumatic incidents.

Staff do not respond effectively when children request support with their health needs. On one occasion, staff did not take a child to an urgently required medical appointment. This put the child at risk.

Managers and staff do not ensure that medication is stored securely. In addition, records are not kept up to date. On the day of the inspection, large quantities of medication were seen left out on a chair. The manager did not know why the medication was not locked away.

During the inspection, one child's bedroom smelt of cannabis. After inspectors raised this, a room search was completed. Staff found medication in the child's bedroom. Staff were unaware of what the medication was for, or the fact that the child had it. This put the child at significant risk, particularly as there is a known risk of self-harming.

The registered manager has not been working in the home since June 2024. The provider has not ensured that appropriate arrangements have been made to cover this absence. Consequently, the home has been managed by different managers from within the company. This has resulted in significant gaps in management oversight and a lack of day-to-day leadership in the home.

The recommendations from the previous inspection were not explored during the visit and therefore remain in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/08/2024	Full	Good
14/05/2024	Full	Inadequate
25/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/07/2022	Full	Good

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

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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) Leaders and managers must ensure that staff know what their roles and responsibilities are in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm.	29 December 2024

Leaders and managers must ensure that staff attend training in safeguarding and child protection, behaviour management, self-harm, and online safety. They should ensure that staff can demonstrate a good understanding of what they have learned. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff have a good understanding of the risk of child exploitation and what actions they should take to manage or reduce the risk. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff know what action to take when children are missing from home and that they follow the plans in place. Leaders and managers must ensure that all medication is stored securely. Leaders and managers must ensure that staff receive training on managing medication safely, including self-medication. Leaders and managers must ensure that there are clear records in place for the administration and refusal of medication.	
*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— 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 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;	29 December 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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met.

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(f)(g)(i)(h))

Leaders and managers must ensure that there are effective monitoring systems in place to review staff practice.

Leaders and managers must ensure that staff have opportunities for learning and reflection when there are shortfalls in practice.

The provider must ensure that a consistent manager is appointed to manage the home effectively and safely.

The provider must ensure that there is a responsible individual appointed who has the capacity, experience, and skills to supervise the management of the home.

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being, such as the use of vapes and tobacco. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. This includes clear recording regarding treatment plans for children with an injury. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2594007

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: Sarah Boddy

Registered manager: Kymberley Grantham

Inspectors

Sarah Probert, Social Care Inspector
Kerri Lynch, Social Care Inspector

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