

2597736

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to two children who may have social, emotional and behavioural problems. The home was registered in July 2020.

There is no registered manager in post, as the former manager resigned in June 2021. The appointed manager has not yet submitted her application for registration.

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.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. Both were present during the inspection and spoke to the inspector.

Children's experiences and progress are compromised by the inability of staff to understand and meet their needs. The impact of these difficulties is poorly understood by leaders and managers. As a result, necessary improvements to the quality of care are not made and children are becoming disengaged from staff. This leaves children at an increasing risk of harm, including self-harm.

The planning for one child moving into the home was exceptionally poor. The former registered manager failed to understand the complexities of this child. There was no effective assessment of their impact on another child, whose wider needs were ignored. The registered manager did not consider whether the staff team had the knowledge and skills to care for the child. The child's complexities are significant, and staff cannot meet their needs. This has had a serious impact on both children in the home and the staff team.

The education needs of one child are not met. An assessment of needs is required, due to this child's background. Staff have failed to ensure that such an assessment is undertaken. The child is struggling to engage in education. Staff do not help the child to recognise the importance of going to school, including the structure that daily attendance brings. There is no urgency to resolve this and the opportunities for this child to learn are reducing.

Staff are failing to meet the health needs of both children. Both children smoke cigarettes. Staff do not discourage this, despite the children's young age. Health plans do not include strategies for helping children to stop smoking. When staff suspect that other people are buying cigarettes for children, there is insufficient challenge to ensure that this practice stops. As a result, children are less healthy now than when they moved into the home.

The approach to supporting one child's identity is not good enough. Training has not taken place, despite the need for this training being recognised when the child moved into the home. On at least one occasion, this lack of knowledge led to a preventable incident occurring because of miscommunication. In addition, the child is at risk of losing sight of their own cultural background. This will significantly reduce their sense of identity.

Children's experiences of trauma are not well understood by staff. Staff are not educated about the impact of trauma, even when assessments conclude that such knowledge is necessary. Staff want to provide good-quality care to children. However, a lack of knowledge means that staff do not know how to respond when

children do not behave in a way that is expected. At times of difficulty, staff's lack of knowledge severely impedes their ability to meet children's needs. As a result, children's well-being is deteriorating.

Staff support children to spend time with their families. Children particularly enjoy seeing their brothers and sisters. Staff work with the carers of the other children to make this time as positive as possible. This is very important to children. Their identity is promoted by maintaining links with members of their family.

Children attend meetings in the home to express their wishes and feelings. At a recent meeting, one child said that they want good staff in the home. Progress against identified actions is reviewed in the subsequent meeting. This means that children are learning that their views matter to adults. This is important for their sense of self-esteem.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

One child is extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Staff do not respond with urgency when the child returns home with items they cannot explain buying. Staff do not have training in issues relating to child exploitation, even though these risks have been apparent for some time. Although the child has recently been referred to a specialist agency for help and advice, this was instigated by the police and not the staff. This child is increasingly vulnerable, because of a lack of action from staff.

Staff are unable to positively influence children's behaviour. Children do not see staff as having appropriate authority. Behaviour management plans are vague and do not support staff with effective strategies. Children's behaviour is becoming increasingly dangerous. As a result, staff use the police to de-escalate difficulties. This further undermines children's views of staff being competent. Children are becoming criminalised because of staff failing to act effectively.

Children have self-harmed since living in this home. For one child, this is a return to behaviour not seen for more than one year prior to moving into the home. The risk for the other child is also increasing. Staff respond to each incident by providing first aid. However, they do not always understand the wider implications of this behaviour. For example, staff did not appreciate the significance of the way in which one child self-harmed recently. This lack of understanding means that children are at risk of escalating levels of harm.

Risk assessments do not help staff to identify and respond to risks. These documents are not specific and do not include contingencies. For example, both children are showing emerging signs of substance misuse. Despite this, risk assessments do not guide staff in how to respond effectively and do not identify the need for specialist support. This means that children are not being helped to become safer.

A high proportion of incidents begin in or around the staff office. Staff spend a large proportion of their time in the office, rather than with children. This was observed

consistently on inspection, even after discussions about the difficulties arising from such behaviour. The responsible individual accepts that this is an ongoing issue.

Staff use physical intervention in accordance with training. All such incidents are well recorded and include discussions with children and staff. Individual incidents include management oversight. This approach means that children understand why physical intervention is used. The opportunity to add to their record helps children to influence the way they are looked after.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has had two managers since it was registered in July 2020. In addition, several staff have left the home since it opened. The remaining staff are low in numbers and working long hours. Staff from other homes within the organisation occasionally provide cover. Although new staff are being recruited, senior leaders have had difficulty attracting competent staff to work in the home. As a result, children are being cared for by staff who are either tired due to long hours worked or are unfamiliar to them. This affects the quality and consistency of care for children.

Management oversight is ineffective. The manager prepares monthly audits of the home's functioning. However, these audits are not evaluative. For example, although the audit notes two staff vacancies, there is no consideration of the impact of low staffing on children or staff. Audits are unrealistically positive and minimise the significant concerns in the home. They do not help to improve the quality of care. This means that safeguarding issues and poor practice continue, resulting in children's progress deteriorating.

External monitoring has not taken place in line with regulation. Almost all independent visits to the home have been virtual. There has been no regulatory provision for such visits since September 2020. This means that the independent visitor has not developed relationships with the children and has rarely seen them interacting with staff. As a result, managers have not been helped by an accurate and evaluative account of how well the home safeguards children and promotes their well-being.

Managers do not challenge professionals who do not perform effectively. Managers pass on information, but do not check that concerns are acted on. This means that there is considerable delay in care planning, management of concerns and arrangements for health and education. As a result, children's needs are not prioritised and met.

Staff say that they feel supported by the current manager, who they find approachable. Supervision sessions happen regularly, and team meetings occur each month. Staff have opportunities to raise their concerns and do so. This helps staff, including new staff, to feel invested in the home.

As a result of this inspection, three compliance notices were issued, in respect of: the quality and purpose of care, the protection of children, and the leadership and management of the home. These notices will be reviewed at a further visit to the home.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) This specifically relates to the social worker urgently identifying an appropriate placement for one child.	22 August 2021
* 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 that— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(v)) In particular, ensure that staff are trained so they can support the children's cultural identity and ensure that staff	22 August 2021

are trained on the impact of trauma, so that they are able to meet the identified needs of children.	
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; and raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vii)) In particular, staff should ensure that an assessment of a child’s communication and learning needs is completed urgently, so that the child receives appropriate learning support.	22 August 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c))	22 August 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; 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—	22 August 2021

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; 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 de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ix)(xi))	
*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; and have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	22 August 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— 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 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	22 August 2021

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)(d)(f)(h))	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that children are only admitted to the home when impact risk assessments take into account the wider needs of any child already living in the home, and the skills and experience of the staff team.	22 August 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))	22 August 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2597736

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: Ian Raine

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector

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