

# 2617923

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a large national organisation. It is registered to care for up to two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. At the time of this inspection, one child was living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

**Inspection date: 16 November 2023**

**Date of last inspection:** 14 June 2023

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector 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'.

## **Outcome from the inspection**

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

- There are systemic failings in leadership and management and in the care and safeguarding of children. Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the requirements made at the last inspection have been met.
- Decisions about whether children's needs can safely be met in this home and alongside one another lack sufficient consideration.
- Leaders, managers and staff have failed to keep children safe from the risk of harm. Incidents of children going missing together and being at risk of sexual exploitation have not been prevented.
- Despite surveillance measures in place, including at times waking night staff, children have gone missing from the home overnight. Strategies designed to prevent this have been ineffective. On one occasion, an unknown male also entered the home without staff knowing.
- Several examples of poor staff practice are under investigation. Leaders and managers are unable to assure the regulator that staff fully understand and will comply with expectations to keep children safe.

## **Findings from the inspection**

Leaders and managers do not have effective oversight of practice in this home. They do not always identify when the care for children falls below that expected. Consequently, significant shortfalls in practice continue, which has resulted in children being left in situations of potential risk. The introduction of a peripatetic manager to support the registered manager has started to identify practice concerns. However, more action is needed to tackle and address the shortfalls swiftly. The very recent development of an action plan provides some reassurance that things should improve. The impact of the action plan is yet to be seen in practice.

The decision to move another child into the home following the last inspection brought about increased challenge for staff and impacted negatively on children. The risk assessment and pre-placement planning failed to fully consider how well each child's needs could be met when living together. Furthermore, one of the children's social workers was not consulted about the move. As a result of this placement, incidents increased and the children were not always safe.

Managers and staff failed to act quickly enough to reduce risks for children. They did not always follow instructions in respect of monitoring the children. This led to children going missing from home during the night without staff being aware. This was also a feature at the previous inspection. Children have gone missing when staff were supposed to be awake during the night or when staff were expected to carry out checks throughout the night. On one occasion, an unknown male was brought into the home by a child during the night without staff realising.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all staff always follow instructions or make sure children's care and risk management plans are followed. On one occasion, a child was left at risk of potential harm and their risks were not fully considered by staff. In another example, staff were instructed by a manager to check children were in their rooms every morning at 7am. Staff only carried out this task on the following two mornings.

Some management investigations into poor practice are weak. Not all are as detailed as they need to be. One investigation failed to consider the potential risk a child was placed at by the actions of a staff member. Other investigations have not been carried out quickly enough to swiftly address poor practice and are still waiting for senior management sign-off.

Managers have not ensured that they consistently and quickly notify Ofsted when there are safeguarding concerns for children or concerns about adults who work in the home as required. On occasion, there has been delay because staff have not escalated concerns to managers swiftly and effectively.

Managers do not always review incidents as well as they should. This prevents them identifying and challenging weaker practice quickly. As a result, this practice has continued. For example, there are errors in how staff manage incidents when children go missing from home.

Concerns identified at the last inspection regarding children having their liberty restricted have been addressed. The manager now actively reviews any action taken, in line with presenting risks. Despite this, risks have not decreased for children.

Children benefit from living in a warm, nicely furnished and welcoming environment. There are pictures of the children and staff around the home which provide reminders of positive experiences. One child has a memory book which gives them lasting memories of their time at this home.

There are some positive relationships between some children and some staff. These relationships are built on trust and mutual respect and children can talk to these staff about their worries and concerns.

Children are encouraged to attend school and staff have aspirations for their future. On occasions when children are excluded from school, staff challenge the school and they advocate well to make sure children are back in education as soon as possible.

Children are supported to have good-quality time with their families and people who are important for them. For one child, work undertaken with a parent has improved the quality of family relationships and has paved the way for the child to be able to return home to their parent's care.

Following this inspection, a notice restricting new admissions to the home was served. Ofsted will continue to monitor and inspect this home.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 14/06/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 27/07/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 26/10/2021      | Full            | Good                            |

## 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                |
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| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(ix))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that children are cared for in line with their care plan and staff meet their needs and reduce known and emerging risks for them.</p> <p>In addition, undertake robust and meaningful assessment and consider each individual child's needs and current and</p> | <p>31 December 2023</p> |

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| <p>emerging risks when considering the placement of additional children in the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies.</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff act to keep children safe. Ensure that staff act in accordance with children’s plans and management direction when children are at risk of harm.</p> <p>In addition, ensure that when children go missing from home, staff act to find them quickly and there are effective systems in place so that staff know when children go missing.</p> <p>Ensure that children are offered a return home interview that helps inform future care planning and risk reduction.</p> | <p>31 December 2023</p> |

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| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that leaders and managers have effective oversight of staff practice and the care and safety of the children and they act quickly when practice falls below an acceptable standard.</p> <p>In addition, ensure that leaders and managers have the skills, knowledge and experience to ensure that staff understand expectations of them and what they need to do to keep children safe and are held to account when practice is weak or unacceptable.</p> | <p>31 December 2023</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff receive meaningful practice-related supervision in line with expectations.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>31 December 2023</p> |

Ensure that staff subject to performance plans are provided with clear information in respect of what they need to do to improve their practice within realistic timescales, and make sure they know how they will be supported to make the changes and what the expected outcome is.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2617923

**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:** Nicola McClements

**Registered manager:** Charlotte Dennis

## Inspector

Tracey Ledder, His Majesty's Inspector

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