

2618541

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 by a large national provider of children's homes. It provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since February 2021.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

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: 2 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2023	Full	Good
12/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, one child has moved to the home and one child has left. The manager and placing authority have worked together to ensure that both children's wishes have been considered to identify the best support for them. The manager advocates strongly for children to spend time with their families. One child has been well supported with their planned move to adult services.

When children are not in formal education, the manager robustly challenges other agencies to secure an appropriate placement. Staff provide opportunities for the child to engage in educational activities. However, there is a lack of daily structure to ensure a consistent routine for the child throughout the day. This limits children's achievements and development.

The home is warm and comfortable. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. Staff actively seek the children's views before making any changes to the home. However, the home has not been well maintained and some parts are unclean. Repair work to the property has not been carried out in a timely way.

The manager and staff care about the children and want them to do well. The children have formed trusting relationships with some of the staff. One child said, 'This is the first time since I left my family that I feel like I have a home again, it doesn't feel like a children's home, and the staff help me with my feelings.'

Children's internal care plans reflect the aims and objectives of the placing authority. Staff do their best to ensure that they provide care in line with these plans. Children are encouraged to share their views and wishes. Staff support children to attend their meetings. Children have access to their records, and staff ensure that children's views are captured.

Managers and staff provide good support to children moving out of the home. They use a well-planned, collaborative approach that is tailored to the child's needs. This includes focusing on skills development, continuity of care and emotional support to empower them to be as independent as possible in their adulthood. These strategies ensure long-term success in adult life.

Managers follow up and escalate concerns if responses from agencies are not satisfactory. This proactive approach ensures that children receive the right support and assists staff in meeting their needs.

The manager and staff carry out regular one-to-one support sessions with children following any concerns. However, this support is reactive to daily events and there has not been forward planning to ensure that children receive support in line with the aims of their plans.

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

Children do not always receive consistent support. This is because some staff are not employed on a permanent basis. Staff do not always show professional curiosity in relation to safeguarding practice. There has been an incident where staff took a child to see friends. This was in the area where the child used to live. Unfortunately, this led to an incident where the child was reported missing from home.

Positively, the frequency of children going missing from home has reduced. Staff follow procedures and work in partnership with the police to locate children quickly and promote their safe return.

Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities. The manager maintains effective partnerships with social workers, police and other safeguarding agencies to promote children's safety. There have been no complaints or allegations since the last inspection.

Staff have not recorded when a child has refused medication for a lengthy period. This makes it difficult to assess if staff have been consistent in encouraging the child to take their medication. On one occasion, staff did not seek medical advice after a child disclosed substance misuse.

Managers recruit staff safely. Robust processes and checks are carried out before staff are employed, to ensure that children are only cared for by safe adults.

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

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager leading this home. She has a thorough knowledge of the children's individual needs. The manager listens to the children's views and takes their wishes and feelings into account in all care planning. This promotes an ethos of child-centred practice.

Staffing shortfalls have led to challenges in providing children with consistent care from a suitably skilled and experienced team. Staff retention problems have resulted in the reliance on regular bank staff to support the children. Although the manager has attempted to ensure that children receive care from familiar staff, this has still had an impact on children's progress and experiences.

Managers and staff recognise behaviours that involve risk. However, inconsistencies in rules and boundaries, coupled with a lack of confidence in the staff team, have resulted in an incident where staff chose for a child to be arrested. This places the child at risk of being criminalised. This incident was out of character for the child and so this could have been avoided with alternative methods. The manager acknowledged that this incident could have been avoided.

External professionals said that the manager communicates well and robustly advocates for the children. They confirm that the manager keeps them informed about any issues arising and any progress made.

Team meetings are used as a forum for learning. The manager is not afraid to challenge and address staff practice. This helps staff to reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement. A staff member said, 'The manager is very good. The best I have ever had, she works so hard.'

Staff feel supported by the manager and the responsible individual. They attend a wide range of training and receive monthly supervision which is reflective and supports staff to learn from events that have happened. This means that staff practice can evolve and improve when necessary. A staff member said, 'The manager is great. We get the support we need.'

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to address the shortfalls identified at the last full inspection. One requirement has been restated.

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— 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; 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)(b)) Specifically, when children are granted free time away from the home, staff must have information about who the child is with and the addresses of the places the child plans to visit. This helps ensure their safety and well-being. In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that when updates are provided to risk management plans after incidents, staff consistently implement the necessary actions to prevent similar incidents from happening again.	1 March 2024
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to—	1 March 2024

achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(c) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff understand and have sufficient oversight of children's specific health needs. When advice is given in relation to meeting children's needs, the registered provider must ensure that this advice is implemented. This includes healthy eating, being supported to take medication and encouraged to wear prescription glasses.	
The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31 (1)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that there is a consistent team of staff who are suitably skilled and experienced to care for the children in their care.	1 March 2024
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(b)(vii)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that damage and wear and tear to the home are identified and rectified in a timely way.	1 March 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there are procedures and guidance for staff to follow so that children are not criminalised for actions that would not lead to this if the same thing happened in a family home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)

- The registered person should ensure that when children are not in formal education, they are provided with an alternative planned routine and structure of learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children are supported in a planned way to meet the objectives in their plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10)

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: 2618541

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane,
Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Louise Winward

Registered manager: Charlotte Leece

Inspectors

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector
Sylvia Eboigbe, Social Care Inspector

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