

SC064666

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a large, national private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since 2010 and is responsible for managing this home and two additional homes.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 June 2018

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: 26 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Good
23/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must protect children from harm and enable them to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) 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. In particular, improve the quality of risk assessments and risk management guidance for staff; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. In particular, upskill the staff team so they have a good understanding of the risks to children's safety in relation to exploitation, gangs, missing behaviour and drug misuse, and empower them to take appropriate action in response to harmful situations and behaviour; (b) 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. In particular, review the arrangements for children spending long periods of unstructured time in the community, and ensure that staff do all they can to assure themselves that they know where children are and what they are doing. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))(iii)(b))	31/07/2018
In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with	31/07/2018

the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the statement of purpose;

(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. In particular, this means having enough suitably trained and qualified staff (including in a management role), on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in placement;

(g) 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. In particular, this relates to ensuring staff have a good understanding of how to protect children who go missing and are engaged in or have a history of engagement in drug misuse, gangs and knife crime.

(Regulation 13(1)(2)(c)(d)(g))

Recommendations

- Ensure that in all planned placements, the children's guide is made available to children when the placement in the home is agreed and that children have the opportunity to meet staff, as set out in the statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- Ensure that the registered person maintains good employment practice and that recruitment, supervision, and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, ensure that the manager is properly supervised in line with the home's policy; and that recruitment files demonstrate that the registered person has made sound decisions about the suitability of staff and agency workers, based on good scrutiny of employment records and checks.
- Ensure that the manager is able to deliver his leadership and management responsibilities and that he has sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of individualised care and support is variable. One child has recently been discharged because the home was no longer meeting his needs. Transition planning is not good. A newly admitted child was warmly welcomed on arrival but had no opportunity to meet or speak to staff, or to see the children's guide prior to his arrival at the home. The child already in placement had little time to prepare for a peer arriving so soon after another young person had left.

Although children have access to a range of health professionals and specialist advisors, their overall progress has declined. Their previously good engagement with education has deteriorated, and their emotional needs have not been well met, despite one child having support from children's mental health services. While children's good health is promoted, they have begun or continued to smoke both cigarettes and cannabis. Advice and guidance from staff and other professionals has not been effective in helping children to stop smoking.

Children know how to make a complaint or raise a concern. They have opportunities to influence their day-to-day living and placement planning. Trips to the cinema and such like are arranged. As children have engaged in more negative behaviour, their opportunity to enjoy fun activities with supportive adults has reduced.

Some children have become disillusioned with the quality of care, and have felt uncared for. A social worker explained how a child felt 'demoralised' and said 'no one listened to him'. The social worker expressed disappointment at the child's lack of progress and highlighted negativity in the way staff communicate with children as a key feature.

A parent explained how things have deteriorated: 'They provided stability and taught him routine and life skills... but now he is not engaging with staff. He chooses what he can do and when he does it. He rules them. I think he can go where he wants, when he wants.'

The back garden is overgrown with very long grass. A rarely used trampoline is available at the bottom of the garden. Ball games are not allowed so as not to disturb neighbours. A picnic table is available in the garden but due to the overgrown lawn, the garden no longer provides a space where children can play. This is not child centred.

Records of key-worker sessions demonstrate that children receive a good deal of advice and guidance relating to their individual needs, but they but they do not give a good overview of the child's response to the advice given. Although staff were aware that a young person wanted to learn to ride a motorbike, they took no action to help the child save up for a bike or driving lessons and missed an opportunity to incentivise the child.

The home is provided with a vehicle, but only one member of the care team is currently able to drive it. Children periodically enjoy trips to the seaside and funfairs. With encouragement from staff, children sometimes enjoy go-karting, playing pool, and

playing football at the park.

One child has enjoyed and benefited from challenging hill walks, including the Three Peaks Challenge. A framed photograph on the dining room wall is testament to the pride that both he and the staff team have in his achievement. Over the last six months, his engagement in such activities has significantly waned.

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

Risk management plans are variable in quality. Guidance for staff on how to manage known risks lacks detail. For example, advice about how to respond when children are under the influence of unknown substances is minimal or missing.

The quality of information shared with the staff team about a newly admitted child, before his arrival, was not good. His compatibility risk assessment was rewritten after more information was obtained. The child's assessment remains basic and lacks depth and detail. It does not identify all known risks for him. Nor does it properly explore the potential impact of his known risk-taking behaviour on the child already in placement. It does not provide clear or strong guidance for staff on how to manage known risks.

Sanctions issued for challenging behaviour are not always appropriate or restorative in nature. On some occasions, children's behaviour is not well managed. Although restraint is rare, behaviour management incidents have led to assaults on staff and a child protection enquiry. It is not clear that the home does all it can to manage children's behaviour safely and avoid criminalising children. That said, the home works in close partnership with the police, who visit frequently and are impressed with the way that staff manage children's challenging behaviour.

Children who are newly admitted to the home are closely supervised until staff are confident that the child can safely go into the community unsupervised. The length of free time children have is extended over time, as staff build up trust in the child.

Some children spend a good deal of time away from the home unsupervised, often in the city centre. They increasingly return home late, and are reported to the police as absent or missing. While staff usually maintain phone contact with children, they often do not know who children are with, or where they are. On three occasions, one vulnerable child has reported that he has been mugged, while being out of the home unsupervised. Police have investigated these reports but have found the child's evidence to be unreliable.

Not all staff have a good understanding of the risks associated with missing children and substance misuse. A parent said: 'They don't tell me who he is hanging round with. There are some local boys he is getting into bother with, but they don't really tell me. Nine times out of ten they don't know where he is, and they ring him. He could tell them anything.'

The arrangements for staff recruitment are not robust. For example, the manager had not satisfied himself of the suitability of an agency staff member before allowing the person to start work at the home. The agency staff member was given no more than an

hour to familiarise himself with children's plans before supervising a child out of the home. This did not ensure that the agency staff member had a good understanding of the children's safety needs and associated risks.

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

The registered manager has been in post since 2010 and, on average, visits the home two or three times a week. In addition, he maintains regular contact with staff by phone. He and the deputy manager are responsible for three homes, which are located within an hour's drive of each other, depending on the time of day. The manager said the journey usually takes 20 or 30 minutes. This arrangement does not provide the registered manager with sufficient capacity to ensure that children receive the best quality of care.

Between them, the registered manager and deputy maintain an overview of the operation of the home and children's progress. The registered manager receives helpful reports from the independent visitor who highlights practice shortfalls, which the home addresses reasonably quickly. Records are mostly well maintained and demonstrate that the home is proactive in working collaboratively with partner agencies and in advocating for children.

Shortfalls in staffing mean that children are looked after by a staff team that is, overall, not suitably qualified. The home is currently carrying two staff vacancies. To promote consistency of care, the staff team covers most gaps in the rota, supported by regular, relief staff and an agency worker who has just started working at the home. There are times when shifts are led by unqualified staff who do not have a good understanding of the complexities of children's needs.

The home is not operating in accordance with its statement of purpose and is not achieving its aims and objectives. Staff are not appropriately trained to meet the individual needs of the children placed or the statement of purpose. For example, the home is set up to offer care to children with autistic spectrum disorders, therapeutic requirements and who have suffered high levels of trauma, yet the staff team is not trained to meet these needs and does not demonstrate a good understanding of children who have complex emotional and/or psychological needs.

Permanent staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisal, which they value. Bank staff are supervised in accordance with company policy, but are not subject to annual appraisal, irrespective of the number of years that they have worked for the provider. A long-standing relief worker has transferred to a permanent position in the home without any formal appraisal, or assessment of skills and suitability for the role. The arrangements for the professional supervision of the manager require improvement as he does not receive regular supervision from a competent person.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children

and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC064666

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Cambian, Waterfront, Hammersmith Embankment,
Chancellors Road, London, Middlesex W6 9RU

Responsible individual: Leanne Woodings

Registered manager: Anjum Khan

Inspector

Sharon Lloyd, social care inspector

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