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SC065855

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a home for three children who have experienced social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Three children currently live in the home, and they were all spoken to as part of the inspection. The manager has been in post since April 2024 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted. They were present on the second day of inspection.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 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: 18 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2023	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
08/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's overall experiences and progress have been mixed. Since the last inspection, two children have left the home and have been able to have a positive move to accommodation that was more suitable to their developing care needs. Personalised plans were created to help the children understand their planned moves.

Two of the three children are enrolled in education. One child's engagement with education, social activities and staff has declined. This has significantly impacted on their educational and emotional progress. The premature sharing of information by staff that had not yet been agreed by the local authority about a potential move may have contributed to this decline.

Staff do not carry out regular checks on a child who spends extensive time in their bedroom. Staff have confirmed that creative measures have been discussed to encourage the child to re-engage. Buying additional gym equipment was suggested to enable a young person to establish a routine and improve their wellbeing at the home when they have struggled to socialise in the community. However, this has not materialised and has prevented the child from engaging in activities that could promote their well-being while not in education.

One child is very settled and has formed trusting relationships with staff. Staff are described as 'kind and caring'. Another child moved into the home a few weeks ago and is starting to develop positive relationships with staff. Children are actively encouraged to engage with their families and socialise with friends, where appropriate. This helps them to develop their identity.

Children's health needs are generally met. However, one child vapes, and although staff have had discussions with the child to discourage this behaviour, other proactive action has not been taken to stop the child vaping in their bedroom. Additionally, vaping in a bedroom would conflict with the home's non-smoking policy.

The general cleanliness of the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room are unsatisfactory because of grubbiness and mice droppings being present. Other risks have related to cut wires, fire doors not shutting properly, and cleaning products and paint left in areas that children can access. Staff and managers are not consistent or proactive in addressing cleaning schedules. The back garden was overgrown, rubble was present, sharp objects were on the patio, and the remanence of burned wood was in the garden.

Two children are approaching independence, and they are encouraged to take part in tasks that enhance their independence skills. However, this is not always consistent because staff do not model effectively. For example, staff do not always clean, promote healthy food choices or demonstrate good organisation skills.

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

The safety of the home was compromised when a home-made fire was lit at the bottom of the garden. The fire could have placed the children, staff and wider community at risk of harm. There was a delay in informing the manager because the staff did not notice that there was a fire in the garden. Emergency fire services were not called immediately by staff and children remained in the property whilst the manager spoke to neighbours and the maintenance. Neighbours called the fire brigade, and the fire was extinguished. Furthermore, fencing in the back garden had been removed so it could be replaced. This left the security of the property vulnerable because the work was not completed in a timely manner. The new fencing was erected during the inspection.

The home requires maintenance and repair work both inside and outside. Managers have not escalated maintenance requests and overlooked poor home conditions. This prevents children from having a safe home that they are proud to live in.

Inconsistent management oversight has caused delay in staff actioning daily cleaning tasks and using their initiative to act without prompting. Furthermore, staff failed to encourage a child not to walk on recently burned wood.

Allegations are managed well and in a timely manner. Appropriate safeguarding agencies are consulted.

Staff respond well to incidents of children going missing from home. Children are supported to return home, and staff respond in line with children's individual plans. Follow-up action is effective because reasons for children going missing from home is explored with children. There have been no incidents of children going missing from home for a significant period of time.

Internet safety is managed well. When incidents have occurred, leaders have taken effective action to ensure that children are protected. Direct work with children regarding bullying, including the bullying pledge and friendship rules, has helped children's relationships with one another. Reflective space has allowed children to consider their actions and share their views.

Feedback regarding partnership working is generally positive. One external professional described communication by staff as 'amazing'. Staff and managers have a genuine care for the children, which is helping everyone to build trusting relationships.

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

Managers accept that not all their aims noted in the statement of purpose are achieved, especially in relation to the conditions in the home. The garden has been in disrepair for an extended period of time, preventing the children from safely enjoying the outdoors. Poor planning between managers and the maintenance team, to discuss how a large tree

would be disposed of, means that the maintenance team went ahead with making a homemade fire in the garden without informing the manager. Some children were present in the home. A risk assessment was completed after the incident occurred, but it was not shared with staff.

Managers did not respond with the same level of concern as neighbours, who called emergency services for the fire to be put out. All staff have fire safety training, but despite this, neither staff nor the manager challenged the actions taken by maintenance staff enough or called the fire brigade. The safety of the children, staff and home was not prioritised.

Inconsistent management oversight and challenge with staff may have contributed to a child slowly disengaging in their daily routine. They are not achieving in their education or meeting their emotional milestones, which could impact on their future outcomes.

The manager is enthusiastic and, in a limited time, has developed a good understanding of the children's unique lived experiences. A positive handover was provided by the previous manager, which has contributed to the current manager's plans for the home. The manager has a realistic understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, which has been informed by the feedback shared in children's meetings.

Staff morale is high, and they feel supported by managers. Staff training and recruitment files are up to date. Continuous professional development is encouraged, and appraisals are completed within timescales. Some staff have been longstanding, which has provided the children with consistency. This has assisted with the new manager's transition into 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
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically refers to the home conditions being consistently kept to hygienic and fire safety standards. All hazardous items should be immediately removed when accessible to children.	30 July 2024
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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)) This specifically refers to management and staff developing a better knowledge and awareness of risks for children and responding to them effectively.	30 July 2024
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.	30 July 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that arrangements are in place to—

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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: SC065855

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Fiona Rees

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Caoimhe Richards, Social Care Inspector
Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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