

SC359818

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group of homes operated by a large independent organisation. This home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 22 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- The acting manager and staff do not have the skills to identify and act on signs that a young person is at risk.
- Staff do not plan or carry out the day taking into account young people's needs and risk-taking behaviour.
- Young people feel unsafe and some young people have self-harmed.
- Young people do not believe that staff can help them with their problems.
- Young people's placements come to an end early because staff cannot reduce the risk of them going missing and behaving unsafely.
- Young people do not receive a visit from an independent person after they have been missing.
- Most young people do not have an educational placement.
- The acting manager and staff do not provide helpful learning opportunities in the home for young people or help them to take part in activities that they have previously enjoyed.
- There has been no registered manager in the home since June 2017.
- Some staff do not have the required qualification in residential care.
- The acting manager does not take a clear lead when young people are in crisis.
- Young people are admitted without consideration of the risks posed by the location of the home.
- The acting manager fails to recognise the poor quality of care or its impact on young people's safety and outcomes.
- The acting manager and staff do not engage effectively with other agencies to help and protect young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Good
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/07/2015	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, 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 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) and (2)(b))	22/10/2017
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 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. (Regulation 13 (1) and (2)(f))	22/10/2017
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff, seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d)) This is with particular reference to forging proactive, effective relationships with local authorities, child and adolescent mental health services, police, youth offending teams, virtual school heads and education providers.	22/10/2017
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 help each child to achieve	22/10/2017

the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans (Regulation 8 (1) and (2)(a)(i))	
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification that the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma; by the relevant date. The relevant date is the date that falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4) and (5))	22/10/2017
The registered person must review the suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year, taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) and (2)) This is a particular reference to the proximity of the main road, canal and railway, in the light of safeguarding incidents that have happened. The police should be consulted as part of this action. *	22/10/2017

* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the home's procedures take into account the views of appropriate local services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing person's incidents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.29)
- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection in February 2017, seven young people have lived here. Of these seven, four young people have left because staff were unable to keep them safe. The three remaining young people have not had their welfare promoted. For example, young people disrupt one another and behave unsafely inside the home and in the community. Staff are unable to manage young people or help them achieve good outcomes.

Young people's admissions and discharges are managed on a crisis basis. For instance, staff do not know enough about young people's needs before they come to the home and do not communicate effectively with young people or their social workers about moves. This means that young people do not receive the right help and support at the start or at the end of their placements.

Most young people do not have an education placement and staff are slow to help them get one. For example, one young person has been permanently excluded from his third alternative vocational training and education placement due to criminal activity with a group of young people at the training venue. It has taken the help of the police to secure a new placement. Staff are not creative or proactive in addressing the barriers to learning that young people experience. If young people have no educational placement, staff sometimes take them to museums and give them test papers to complete. Staff do not find ways to engage young people's interest or sustain it. For example, one young person's care plan says that she is interested in arts and crafts, swimming and horse-riding. However, staff only offered swimming on two occasions. The young person refused both these offers. Staff have only put on one arts and crafts session for her in the last three months. Staff have dismissed the idea of horse-riding, because they have deemed it unsafe. Overall, young people make inadequate progress in their learning and development. This reduces young people's chances of a positive future.

Young people are inadequately prepared for their futures. Staff do not give young people consistent advice, support and help. As a result, young people have not matured emotionally or learned the practical skills that they need. For example, one young person has lived in this home for over a year. He is moving into semi-independent living soon, but is unable to make and sustain safe and appropriate friendships and sexual relationships. He is still unable to manage his money properly. Staff are still supervising some of his allowances in an effort to deter him from mispending it. He has no routine to his days because he has not been able to sustain previous work and education opportunities.

Staff do not plan activities well in advance or help young people to prepare for appointments and activities. Young people therefore often refuse to attend appointments or take part in activities. Young people on curfews often break them. Although staff play football and basketball with young people and take them on day trips to seaside towns in the summer, no young person has had a holiday this year. Group activities are

frequently abandoned because young people behave unsafely together.

Young people say that it is 'alright' here and that they like staff. One young person said, 'I get on with most staff – they helped me calm down yesterday – they did not stop it, but they helped me.'

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

The acting manager and staff do not have the skills to identify and act on signs that young people are at risk. As a result, young people are not safe and sometimes do not feel safe. Young people are frequently missing. They frequently self-harm and damage property. Some of them have got involved in burglary, assault and underage sexual intercourse. The responses of the acting manager and staff are ineffective and fail to protect young people.

Young people struggle with their emotional and behavioural difficulties and tell staff this. One young person said, 'I don't feel safe being in the same home as one of the young people. She is a danger to the other young people and staff too. When she has her breakdowns, it is difficult knowing what she will do. I find it too stressful and the noise is too much for me to handle.' Another young person said, 'Sorry about my behaviour – I need the help and support of staff to get me back to the person I used to be.' Staff have not provided effective help and support to young people; their unsafe behaviour has continued and, as a result, their placements break down.

Staff monitor young people and record unsafe incidents, but they do not respond to situations insightfully or creatively. For example, young people leave notes for staff about wanting to self-harm and repeatedly break into the office to get objects that they can use to self-harm. Staff are unable to take control, reassure the young person or prevent situations from worsening. Staff are indecisive and reactive in their interventions. As a result, the young person frequently self-harms and damages property. The young person then needs hospital treatment and crisis assessment by child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

Staff have not reduced the incidence of young people going missing. Most young people have gone missing a number of times, often taking another young person with them. Young people have tried to jump from a nearby canal bridge and have run onto busy train tracks. Young people have run into the dual-carriageway road outside. They have run away with other young people and young adults in order to have sexual intercourse or use drugs. A few young people have been involved in crimes while missing. A few young people run away in order to get back to their home area.

Staff do not work together with other agencies to protect young people. For example, out of 55 missing from home incidents, staff have only once ensured that a young person received a 'return from being missing interview' with an independent person. Similarly, staff do not have effective communication with young people's social workers to plan a good-quality response to self-harm and violent incidents. Instead, staff blame social workers for telling young people what is happening without making staff aware.

Staff have not created a positive working relationship with CAMHS, or their own clinical advice, to ensure that young people receive a therapeutic response. Staff have not engaged in useful dialogue with police about the risks in the locality or discussed with concerned neighbours how to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Staff and the acting manager do not manage young people's behaviour with skill or insight. For example, the staff impose supervision of young people's spending money as a sanction for going missing and committing robbery. Staff explore allowing a young person free time, despite the high risk of self-harm and sexual exploitation during her frequent missing episodes. Staff say this is because, 'she always comes back and completing the missing procedures is time consuming'. When a young person broke a door and said that he hated it here, staff responded by offering him the telephone to call his social worker to ask for a move. The staff response to young people in the home having sexual relationships is to hasten moves out to independence, and to set up home rules that include young people being told not to hold hands, kiss, hug and touch.

Staff and the acting manager do not recognise what is behind young people's unsafe behaviour or take the time to plan helpful staff responses. For example, staff felt that there was 'no trigger' for a young person seriously self-harming during the inspection. They did not discuss the likely impact of a possible move, the death of a relative, the loss of a boyfriend or the young person's ongoing attachment and self-esteem difficulties. After the incident, they did not spend time preparing the young person for meeting with staff from a prospective new placement. The following day, they asked a member of staff from another home to take the young person out for the day to a museum and shopping. They had too few drivers for any staff on shift to go. Staff did not discuss the rationale for this plan or how the less-familiar staff would meet the young person's current needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been no registered manager in the home since June 2017. The acting manager does not take a lead in times of crisis. For example, during the inspection, two senior managers had to step in to offer advice and to direct the acting manager when a young person barged into the office and grabbed a chain and objects with which she intended to harm herself. The acting manager gave no clear advice or reassurance to the young person or staff during the physical interventions that were necessary. As a result, the incident escalated further and the young person seriously self-harmed.

None of the staff who work in senior positions leading shifts have the required qualification in residential care for young people. Only one residential care worker on the staff team is qualified. The acting manager and her senior staff do not think clearly or evaluate the impact of what they do on the number of serious incidents that young people are having. As a result, young people do not feel safe and supported. The acting manager and the previous registered manager have not reviewed the risks that exist in the home's location. They have not considered numerous unsafe incidents around the main road, the canal, the railway lines and the neighbouring house that accommodates care leavers. The current review report says, 'There are no particular

risks posed to young people in the immediate location.’ Managers have not sought the views of police, neighbours or relevant others to help them create a useful location review document. This means that the acting manager has no starting point for deciding what young people they can safely care for and what strategies are needed to minimise and reduce risk.

The organisation’s senior leaders, the acting manager and the previous home manager have not ensured that young people’s placements have a realistic chance of success. For example, the home’s independent monthly visitor reported in August 2017 that, ‘There are currently two young people who may have to leave the home due to issues around child sexual exploitation. These issues were known at referral stage.’ The parent of one of these young people complained about the home and the young person was moved.

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: SC359818

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Cambian Group, 4th Floor Waterfront Building,
Chancellors Road, Hammersmith Embankment, London W6 9RU

Responsible individual: Alison Blyth-Bishop

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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