

SC359846

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for up to five children with complex needs and who have suffered early childhood trauma. It is owned by a large organisation.

The manager, who registered in August 2022, resigned in May 2023. An interim manager is in post until a permanent manager is recruited.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/06/2021	Full	Good
09/01/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/05/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The home is not managed effectively. Managers' and senior managers' oversight is not sufficient and safeguarding practice is weak. This impacts negatively on children's overall experiences and progress.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Since the previous inspection, one child has moved out. This child moved out sooner than anticipated as staff were unable to keep them safe. Staff did not provide further support to the child either emotionally or practically after they moved out of the home.

Not all children feel safe or listened to in the home. Two children told the inspector that they feel safe and that the care from staff is good. However, another child said, 'It's just boring here. I don't really go out. I stay in my room most of the time. The manager and staff haven't done anything when I ask them about it.'

Staff do not always promote equality and diversity well. For example, the cultural needs of one child have not been met. On occasions, one child did not have the appropriate hair care, even though they had been living at the home for some time. This demonstrates failures to meet children's individual needs.

When the children have raised issues about the care they receive and staff practice, this has not been responded to appropriately. For example, when children have raised concerns about other children's behaviours and bullying incidents, managers have not taken sufficient action and ensured children receive a response to their concern. This lack of a suitable response does not help children to feel that their views and wishes are valued and taken seriously.

Staff successfully support two children with their school education. These children have good attendance and make good progress. However, this is not consistent for all children. For example, staff do not always engage one child, who is not attending school, effectively each day in structured learning and education activities. Consequently, this child is left to their own devices during the day and staff are not curious about how they spend their time in their bedroom. This does not promote high expectations and aspirations for children to achieve.

Staff work alongside the in-house therapist to provide children with specialist informed care. However, staff do not always implement the agreed strategies and bespoke plans to help them provide good care to meet children's needs. This inconsistent approach is an ongoing weakness in some staff practice and hinders children in making progress.

Staff do not ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities outside the home. One child said, 'Staff have left [the home] so we never have a lot of time to go on activities... and are stuck on site at times.' This means that children have limited opportunities to develop friendships, build confidence and social awareness and expand their life opportunities.

The environment is poor in places and is not homely or welcoming. For example, one child's bedroom is sparsely furnished, with only a bed, and there is damage to the walls. Another child does not have access to their personal belongings, and some areas of the home are not clean and tidy. In addition, managers do not ensure that repairs and maintenance are undertaken in a timely way. This detracts from the children living in a nurturing, comfortable and homely environment.

Staff support children well to maintain important and positive relationships with family members. They communicate with social workers to review the arrangements for children to spend time with their families. Staff show a good understanding of the importance of children spending meaningful time with their families. As a result, children benefit from maintaining a sense of belonging and identity.

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

Staff fail to demonstrate they understand their role in safeguarding the welfare of children in their care. They did not take action to help protect children from harm. For one child with a health condition, managers and staff failed to ensure the child received the emergency healthcare they required, as stated in their risk management plans. Managers failed to identify this concern and address it.

Managers and staff are not proactive in minimising potential risk of harm online. For example, staff are not demonstrating that they undertake effective online checks to promote the safety of one child where there are known risks. Managers do not ensure that staff fully understand these risks or how to protect the child online.

Managers and staff do not act when there are concerns about poor relationships between children. For example, when one child informed staff of bullying incidents, they received a poor response. Staff failed to support both children to address the issue and come to a resolution.

The approach to managing risk is weak. Managers do not provide staff with sufficient information and guidance to manage and reduce risk. Written risk management plans do not always contain all the relevant information, including when new risks emerge. This limits staff's ability to keep children safe.

Managers and staff use monitoring and surveillance of some children without good reason. For example, one child's bedroom door is fitted with an alarm to alert staff when the child leaves their bedroom. However, there are no known safeguarding risks to the child's welfare. This places unnecessary restrictions on children's ability to move freely in their home and infringes on their privacy.

Incidents of children going missing from home are rare. However, when they do go missing, the response from staff and managers is good. Staff carry out initial searches in the local area and liaise with the police and local authority to locate the child. However, staff are not familiar with national missing-from-care protocols and children's written plans lack specific information.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are weak and inconsistent. There is no registered manager at the home. The previous manager registered in August 2022 and resigned in May 2023. An interim manager is in post, but they do not intend to register. The responsible individual has been in post since 2019 and is actively recruiting for a new registered manager.

Leaders and managers are failing to ensure they improve the quality of care and meet regulations. Since May 2019, regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) has been breached on five occasions and on three occasions a compliance notice has been issued. Regulation 12 (the protection of children standard) has been breached on six occasions. This demonstrates leaders' and managers' inability to sustain improvements.

Oversight and monitoring of the operation of the home are poor. Managers fail to identify shortfalls in the quality of care. Weak oversight means that managers fail to identify or act when there are concerns about the behaviour of children or poor staff practice. These shortfalls contribute to a poor safeguarding culture and leave children at risk of harm.

The inspector found that leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the home operates in accordance with the ethos and aims set out in the home's statement of purpose. Children do not always receive nurturing care to meet their individual needs. Leaders and managers have failed to act to improve the environment, particularly for one child whose clothing and personal care items are locked away.

Leaders and managers do not proactively assess staff knowledge and skills to ensure that they can meet the needs of children and keep them safe. Consequently, some staff have not received training to ensure they have the knowledge necessary to meet children's individual needs. For example, some staff have not received training to improve their understanding of online safety, behaviour management, safeguarding children or the administration of medication.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff receive regular and reflective supervisions to help them understand their roles and responsibilities and to develop their practice to safeguard children. Most staff have not had supervision since the last inspection in February 2023. Furthermore, managers do not use supervision effectively to monitor staff progress and professional development.

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that children's records and care plans are kept up to date and that they are reflective of their needs and capture and track their

progress. For example, personal care and placement plans do not contain essential information about children's needs. In addition, on occasions, staff have failed to record relevant information in children's health records and daily records. This means that information about children is limited and has the potential to misrepresent their journey.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This specifically relates to managers and staff ensuring that they support children to express their views and consult with them and provide feedback.	21 July 2023
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—	21 July 2023

that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(viii)) This particularly refers to the registered manager and staff ensuring that children are supported to overcome barriers to their learning.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those	21 July 2023

expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(xi)(xii)(b)) This particularly refers to the managers and staff ensuring they support children to repair relationships between them. It also relates to managers and staff ensuring children are supported to understand that bullying is unacceptable and helped to build positive relationships.	
*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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) This particularly refers to the registered manager and staff ensuring that they protect children from harm. They must understand their roles and responsibilities to protect children,	21 July 2023

take action to prevent children from harming one another and follow child protection procedures. It also refers to staff ensuring that they understand potential risks, minimise risks and follow children's risk assessments.	
*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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(h)) This particularly refers to the manager ensuring that staff have a consistent approach to children's care. It also relates to the manager ensuring that they and all staff receive essential training. In addition, the responsible individual must have effective oversight skills to carry out their role. It also relates to the manager ensuring that they use internal monitoring systems more effectively. It also relates to the manager and staff ensuring that they	21 July 2023

provide children with a nurturing and safe home environment.	
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(c)(d)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that monitoring or surveillance of children is for the purpose of safeguarding.	21 July 2023

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure they have specific arrangements for individual children to safeguard them when they go missing from care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- The registered person should ensure that staff seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

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: SC359846

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: Jolanda Brookes

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, Social Care Inspector

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