

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 operated by a large private organisation. Staff provide care for up to five children between the ages of eight and 16. The children who live at the home may have experienced childhood adversity.

The registered manager post has been vacant since May 2022. A new manager is now in post and intends to make an application to register.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 September 2023

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: 5 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

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

Inspection judgements

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

One child has continued to live at the home since the last inspection. The managers have not taken sufficient action to chase the child's social worker for statutory information and ensure that the child's in-house plans are kept up to date. This means that staff do not have access to key information to help inform the child's care, and it is unclear if the child's plans take account of all of their needs.

The child has positive relationships with staff and enjoys spending time with them, including watching films, going out on activities, and sharing mealtimes. These bonds help the child to feel a sense of belonging.

Support from staff helps the child to make progress with their education. Staff consult with other professionals regularly to ensure a collaborative approach to supporting the child's learning. Effective challenge from the manager means that consideration is being given to extending the time that the child spends in school.

The child enjoys good health and receives support to attend regular health appointments and health assessments.

Staff take the child's views seriously and regularly consult with the child to gain their views and wishes. Staff share the child's requests with the child's social worker to ensure a shared approach to meeting the child's needs.

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

Missing-from-home incidents are not always well managed by staff. On two occasions, staff did not follow the child's missing-from-care protocol, which requires that staff search for the child to ascertain their whereabouts. On one occasion, the child was missing for three days. Failure by staff to follow practice guidance means that opportunities to ensure the child returns home as quickly as possible may be missed.

Managers have undertaken an assessment of the suitability of the home's location. However, this has not included consultation with local services, including the police. This reduces the manager's understanding of any risks posed to children in the local community and reduces the manager's ability to plan to reduce risk.

Staff support the child to understand how to raise concerns about their care. As a result, the child feels safe and able to speak to staff about any worries they may have.

When concerns have arisen concerning exploitation, the manager has liaised promptly with the child's placing local authority. Staff's direct work with the child has raised the child's awareness about the risks of going missing from the home, healthy relationships and how to identify safe people.

When staff use consequences in response to unacceptable behaviour, the reasons are discussed with the child. This allows the child to reflect on what has happened and think about their behaviour. The manager reviews the consequences to ensure that they are fair and effective.

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

The manager's monitoring systems are not always effective. For example, the manager's audits have missed shortfalls in the physical conditions of the home. A garden wall has gone unrepaired for over three months. Some actions from the health and safety risk assessment have not been completed within the required timescales. In addition, the manager's monitoring systems have not picked up that the child's risk assessments are not always updated by staff following bedroom searches.

Managers have not ensured that the staffing schedules clearly set out which adults are working in the home. For example, the rotas do not include the full names of staff. For one staff member, a nickname is used. This lack of clarity means it could be difficult to identify who has worked at the home in the event of a future complaint or concern being raised.

Some staff have not undertaken all of the mandatory training required. This includes training in the safe storage and administration of medication. However, more positively, the staff have been provided with bespoke training in relation to exploitation and online safety. Team meetings are used to develop staff knowledge and skills and have included discussions in areas such as missing from care. Experienced staff support new staff members in understanding the child's needs.

A new manager has recently come into the post. She is passionate about her role and has a clear vision for the development of the home. She is well supported by senior managers, and together they have put an action plan in place to develop the staff and home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff take action as set out in children's missing-from-care protocols.	18 October 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that monitoring systems identify health and safety shortfalls In addition, the registered person must ensure that children's plans are updated in a timely way.	18 October 2023

Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a))	18 October 2023
The registered person must review the appropriateness and 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) (2))	18 October 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that all children's case records (regulation 36) are kept up to date and stored securely while they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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

Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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