

SC405713

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who have social and/or emotional difficulties. It is privately owned and forms part of a large social care company.

Visit dates: 5 to 6 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 21 February 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Improved effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Managers and staff understand young people's needs. Care plans are up to date and offer clear guidance to staff. They also include the views of young people.

Young people told the inspectors that at times the home felt too busy and there were too many new faces at the home. Staff have, however, discussed with young people the planned changes in the staff team. One young person stated that they did not always feel listened to, however, inspectors found that managers had responded immediately and contacted the young person's social worker to share his views on the home.

The young people asked to have a pet. Staff purchased both young people a kitten. This has proved to be very positive for the young people, who take good care of the kittens with support from staff. Staff report that the kittens have had a calming effect on the young people.

Both young people attend school and are making progress. Staff maintain regular communication with both young people's schools. One teacher told the inspectors: 'We have regular communication with the home. The young person has settled well and seems happy. She talks about doing a number of activities with staff that she hasn't had the opportunity to do previously.'

Staff have supported young people to understand the impact of COVID-19 and the effect it has had on them. Staff have supported young people to stay in contact with their family and friends throughout the period of social restrictions.

The safety of children

Staff consider the matching of young people who move into the home well. They consult with those who are already living in the home to gain their views, for example, if there is a gender difference. This means that young people feel their opinions are valued. This also means that the young people who are moving into the home feel at ease and settle in quickly.

Risk assessments are very detailed and thorough. They identify risks of harm, any known triggers and outline ways to ensure young people's safety. Staff understand risks well and respond immediately to ensure that young people are safe.

When staff complete risk assessments they do not seek to include young people's views. However, staff do support young people to consider unsafe scenarios during key work sessions. This helps young people to understand the ways in which they can keep themselves safe.

There is a clear protocol in place for staff to follow should young people go missing. Young people form positive relationships with their key workers. This means they are able to seek support from them should they need to. As a result, young people do not go missing from home.

Young people understand the boundaries in their home. They receive praise when they have done well, for example, adapting well to the challenges caused by COVID-19. Young people receive rewards in a variety of ways, such as, buying something new for their bedroom or choosing a takeaway.

Staff manage young people's behaviour well. Staff empathise with young people and seek to resolve incidents quickly. Since the last inspection, staff have not needed to use physical interventions and there has only been one incident which resulted staff calling the police.

Leaders and managers

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2019. The last manager left the home in July 2020, prior to registering with Ofsted. An experienced registered manager from another home in the company is providing leadership and management support. There is a plan for the deputy manager to take over the manager's role, and the provider is supporting him to complete additional management training.

Managers ensure that staff receive supervision and support. Regular team meetings take place which give staff the opportunity to discuss the young people and reflect on practice.

Despite changes in staffing managers have ensured that young people receive care from a consistent staff team. Managers have offered regular staff additional shifts and used staff from their sister home to fill gaps in the rota. However, managers do not accurately record the names of staff who work in the home on the rota. Managers have taken swift action to address any complaints or concerns raised by young people.

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 registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	30/11/2020
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered	30/11/2020

person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)) This is in relation to maintaining an accurate copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home. (Schedule 4(3))	
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Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC405713

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Cambian Childcare Ltd, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Sorrelle Fern

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector
Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector

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