

# SC456911

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It provides care for up to six children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2022. The manager was not present for the inspection.

### Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
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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:** 20 August 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 20/08/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 30/08/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 20/09/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 09/12/2021      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, three children have moved out and two children have moved in. Two children were seen as part of the inspection; one child shared their views.

Children have not always experienced planned endings. Two children have moved out of the home because their needs could not be met by staff. One child moved out in an unplanned way after a series of significant incidents at the home when staff failed to manage their behaviour. This resulted in the child being arrested and not returning to the home. This did not help this child to have a positive ending with staff and their peers. One child moved out to a semi-independent home as part of a planned move when they turned 18. They keep in touch with staff at the home because they built positive relationships.

The are now working towards independence and are due to move out in the summer. They are being supported by staff and are making decisions about cooking, cleaning and budgeting. They are developing skills that will help them progress to adulthood. However, staff do not maintain clear records of how they support the children with these skills or the impact the support has had in helping the children make progress.

In May 2025, there was significant damage to the home. Repairs were made promptly to make the home safe again. However, some additional maintenance and repair is still needed to make the home feel welcoming again.

Staff support for children's education and work opportunities has not been consistently strong. Two children have completed their exams and are exploring options for post-16 education or employment. One child is not attending education because of their emotional needs. Despite these challenges, their social worker spoke positively about the support staff are providing to the child to encourage the importance of education. However, one child who is exploring options for apprenticeships or employment said staff had not yet helped them with their employment search. A social worker said that a child who had declined to attend education and missed their exams has said they did not feel listened to by staff about their education choices.

The children spend free time in the community, either with staff or independently. When children spend time with staff, they have done activities such as biking, going bowling or visiting the beach. The children also enjoy spending age-appropriate time with their friends.

Two children have moved to this home from the provider's sister home, which provides specialist care for children with mental health needs. They have made progress from their starting points and no longer require the same level of support for their well-being. These children have been able to build resilience and independence skills. Children have

a positive relationship with the manager. One child said they have some members of staff they can talk to.

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

Children have had mixed experiences during a recent significantly unsettled period in the home. Staff have not felt confident in supporting children with their behaviour at times of high stress and challenge. This has meant children have been unsafe. They have caused damage to the home and presented a risk to themselves and others over a period of six to eight weeks. Before this, children were more settled, and one child had lived at the home for over two years.

Staff have not had the skills to manage children's behaviour. Consequently, incidents between children have escalated and staff have required police involvement to help them manage the situation. Leaders and managers have not consistently spoken to staff after these events, or done so promptly to understand what support and training needs staff have. In addition, staff do not always write detailed reports of incidents to help leaders and managers understand what happened.

Children have sometimes needed to be physically held by staff. This has been necessary and proportionate. However, staff are not always spoken to promptly after these incidents. This does not help leaders and managers understand the use of the hold, or how they can support staff to learn from these incidents. On some occasions, staff have not felt confident to use physical intervention. This contributed to the police being called to manage children's behaviour. This does not help children to feel safe and places them at increased risk of criminalisation.

The manager has not always reported incidents that have involved the police, or other serious events, to Ofsted at the time. Children's social workers said that communication about children's behaviour is not always clear. This does not help to give Ofsted and other relevant professionals appropriate oversight of information and potential concerns.

Leaders and managers have ensured there are suitable investigations into any staff practice concerns. The manager has shared any such concerns promptly with the local authority designated officer.

Staff have failed to be vigilant about keeping all areas of the home safe for children. On a couple of occasions, children have gained access to items in the staff office which could cause harm. On one occasion, a child was able to inappropriately access medication.

On another occasion, a member of staff did not follow the home's policy on administering medication. As a result, a child was able to share their medication with another child. The manager took appropriate steps to ensure this did not happen again and this information was shared with relevant professionals.

Children have regularly gone missing from the home. When children go missing, staff generally look for them, encourage them to come home and speak to them when they return home about them going missing. However, on some occasions, staff do not quickly respond to children's needs. The manager does not have clear records of requests for return home interviews to be carried out by the child's local authority. There is no system to identify any learning from children's missing-from-home experiences.

Children receive consequences relevant to their behaviour. However, records lack clarity. It is not always clear which staff have imposed the consequence, or the effectiveness of this consequence. Staff offer children positive praise, but this is inconsistent and infrequent. This does not help to support children to build positive relationships with staff.

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

There has been inconsistent leadership from senior leaders. Leaders and managers' oversight and monitoring of the home have been ineffectual. At times of challenge, there has been inconsistent management oversight. This has resulted in some poor outcomes for some children.

Since January 2025, two responsible individuals and a deputy manager have left. The new responsible individual is now supporting the home at a time of challenge when a number of concerns have been raised about children's recent experiences. The new responsible individual had identified these shortfalls before the inspection and has taken swift action to ensure changes are made to help keep children safe. However, these plans have yet to take effect.

There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. At times of challenge, there have been periods of staff absence when children have been supported by staff from a sister home. Sometimes, staff have not had the skills and experience to meet the needs of all the children when they have been distressed. The majority of new staff are inexperienced and do not hold a relevant level 3 qualification.

Since the last inspection, staff have not received regular one-to-one supervision sessions. This is despite the challenging time at the home. New members of staff in their probation periods have not received supervision support in line with the home's statement of purpose. As a result, staff have lacked opportunities to reflect on the children's experiences and to discuss practice issues. The lack of appropriate staff supervision has potentially reduced leaders' oversight of staff's skills and training needs.

Staff generally receive regular training. However, several new staff have yet to complete the home's mandatory online training. Some staff are yet to complete appropriate training that is specific to the children's identified needs. Consequently, staff have not always been confident in responding to behaviour from children that has challenged them. This has resulted in an escalation of incidents and, for a short period of time, children and staff have felt unsafe.

Some records in the home are of poor quality. This does not help leaders or managers to understand children's experiences or identify learning from incidents and help to improve staff practice.

The responsible individual has identified a clear plan to address the shortfalls and has taken steps to ensure children feel safe at the home and are helped by staff.

All three requirements raised at the last inspection have not been met and are therefore restated.

## 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          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>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) (2)(a)(iv)(v)(vii)(b))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> | 31 July 2025      |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 30 September 2025 |

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| <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> |                   |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii))</p>                                                                         | 31 July 2025      |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 30 September 2025 |

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| <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>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.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> |              |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 18 June 2025 |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should agree with local police procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour, and criminalisation of children. Children should not be charged with offences resulting from behaviour in a children's home that would not similarly lead to police involvement if it occurred in a family home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)
- The registered person should ensure there are systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. In particular, ensure that medication in the home is appropriately stored and locked away in line with policy.

(‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)

- The registered person should ensure staff recognise and celebrate the achievements of their children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 31, paragraph 6.7)
- The registered person should ensure that children’s homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that recording of incidents is clear and detailed about what actions staff take to support children and when. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## **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:** SC456911

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Cambian Childcare Limited

**Registered provider address:** 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

**Responsible individual:** Michael Coleman

**Registered manager:** Charlotte Young

## Inspector

Rebecca Hannell, Social Care Inspector

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