

SC476270

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation and offers care and accommodation for up to five children who have suffered significant harm or childhood trauma.

There has not been a registered manager in the home since December 2019. There is currently an interim manager in post.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 5 November 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. This report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 July 2021

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 widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 19 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
12/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2018	Full	Good
02/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Three children were living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Care planning for children is poor. When a new child was admitted to the home, the manager did not obtain all the relevant information quickly enough for it to be of use. The manager's and staff's lack of professional curiosity means that they are slow to chase for important information from the children's social workers. In June 2021, two siblings were admitted to the home without sufficient information or planning. Very quickly, it was decided that the siblings could not be placed together, and one child's placement ended. As a result of these shortfalls, managers have admitted children to the home without knowing if they can meet the child's needs or care for them safely.

Children who are preparing to leave the home are not well supported. One child is transitioning to foster care. The child has significant anxiety about this move due to a placement breakdown earlier this year. Despite being aware of the child's anxieties, staff have not provided him with individual support to help him to prepare for this transition. This demonstrates a lack of consideration for this child's well-being.

The quality of children's records, such as care plans, placement plans and education plans, is poor. Despite recent review, there are gaps in the information recorded. Children's records are not up to date and do not reflect the current situation. In addition, staff do not routinely read these documents. This means that staff do not know how to care for the children safely.

Staff are not providing care as outlined in children's care plans. Key-work sessions are not linked to children's goals or specific difficulties that they need support with. These failings mean that staff are not supporting children to make progress.

Children are not supported to make progress in education. One child does not have an education provision in place following the closure of his school. Managers have taken no action to address this. The other two children attend the company's education provision. Both children are on reduced educational timetables as they cannot attend the school with other specific children. Managers have not challenged these arrangements effectively. In addition, staff do not support children throughout the day with informal opportunities to learn.

Managers have not ensured that children's records are child friendly or that children are provided with opportunities to contribute to their records and care planning. The voice of the child and their wishes and feelings do not feature in their records. As a result, children's views are not valued.

The house is not a clean or well-maintained environment for children to live in. Every area of the home, including the children's bedrooms, shows signs of damage. One child has a broken chest of drawers. Staff told the inspector that it has been like this for a month. This does not help children to feel respected or cared for.

Staff have positive relationships with children. Children seek staff out to spend time with them.

Feedback from children's social workers is generally positive.

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

The staff's supervision and monitoring of children are poor, which does not safeguard children. On three occasions, one child has been able to access inappropriate images online. On two of these occasions, these images were shared with another child living in the home. Strategies put in place are not sufficient to prevent further incidents or to safeguard the children.

Staff have been unable to prevent children from harming one another. There have been occasions when children have physically assaulted each other. The poor supervision of children has placed them at risk of significant harm.

There are aspects of the physical environment that are not safe. The fence at the front of the property is not sufficient to prevent children from climbing over to other areas of the home and the adjacent school. On 1 July 2021, the police and fire service were called as one child from the home and three children from the school were on the roof of the building. During the inspection, the inspector observed a child climb over the fence onto a low-level roof to retrieve an item that had been thrown over. Staff's response to this behaviour was not effective.

Risk assessments are not up to date and do not reflect all known risky behaviours. These documents are not individualised and do not provide sufficient guidance for staff to follow to keep children safe. In some areas, risk assessments advise staff to use interventions and strategies that are irrelevant and not associated with the risk. Staff are not routinely reading risk assessments when they have been updated. As a result, staff are not informed of all risks or the actions they should take to protect children.

The manager has not reviewed sanctions quickly or ensured that staff speak with children when sanctions are issued. Staff do not talk to children to explain sanctions or discuss their behaviour. In addition, the effectiveness of the sanction is not considered. This oversight does not support children to understand and learn from their behaviour.

Staff use some interventions that are not risk assessed, such as removing one child's television aerial overnight. In addition, staff do not routinely complete checks which are in place to keep children safe, such as checking mobile phones and other electronic devices. This lack of action does not support children to be safe online.

Impact risk assessments that are completed for new children coming into the home are poor. They do not include all known risks for children and do not fully explore the impact that the risks may have on other children. In June 2021, two siblings were admitted to the home. Each child's impact risk assessment did not capture the risks and behaviours between the sibling pair despite a clear history of concerning behaviour. The failure to consider the interplay between children and staff's ability to meet the children's individual needs resulted in notice being served on two occasions.

Staff are not supporting children to understand or minimise their own risks. Managers have failed to ensure that staff complete direct work with children following an incident. This is a missed opportunity to help children to develop an understanding of their own risks and make positive choices.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has not been a registered manager in post since December 2019. The current manager has been managing the home since the summer of 2020. She is yet to apply to register with Ofsted. The management arrangements at the home have not been sufficient to ensure that children receive safe and well-coordinated care.

The manager has failed to take swift and effective action to address the shortfalls within the home that she is aware of. As a result, the progress seen at the monitoring visit in November 2020 has not been sustained.

The manager has failed to ensure that there is an accurate roster in place that records the planned and actual hours worked by all staff. As a result, these documents cannot be relied on to identify when staff have been at work. This means that Ofsted cannot be assured that children are suitably and safely cared for.

The manager has not ensured that all staff have the necessary training to meet children's needs. Some staff have not completed mandatory training or additional training that would provide them with the skills required for their roles.

The manager does not have an effective monitoring system in place that allows for sufficient oversight of the home. The manager's review of documents has not identified errors or omissions in paperwork. As a result, most of the home's paperwork, including sanctions, care plans, placement plans and risk assessments, is of poor quality.

Staff told the inspector that they are well supported by the new manager and feel that things in the home have recently improved. Staff are receiving supervision and have access to regular team meetings.

In response to the widespread concerns identified on 21 July 2021, Ofsted issued a notice restricting the accommodation.

Following this inspection, three compliance notices were issued under regulation 12 (the protection of children standard), regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) and regulation 14 (the care planning standard).

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (b)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered persons escalating concerns and challenging the relevant organisations and professionals to ensure that children receive the support they require to meet their needs. This includes an education provision.	12 September 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding.	12 September 2021

(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)(viii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the home environment is safe, welcoming and well maintained. This also relates to ensuring that there is adequate age-appropriate toys and activities available to children.	
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 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; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; 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; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(viii)(x)(b)) This specially relates to ensuring that all children have access to appropriate education and learning. This also refers to ensuring that children are provided with informal learning opportunities.	12 September 2021

*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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that risk assessments are up to date, accurate and include effective strategies for staff to follow. This also includes ensuring that staff provide sufficient supervision of children to safeguard them and to prevent incidents from occurring. In addition, the registered persons must all ensure that all staff read children’s risk assessments and support children to understand and reduce their own risks. This requirement was made at this last inspection and is restated.	12 September 2021
*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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	12 September 2021

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 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) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that there are effective monitoring and review systems in place to review and improve the quality of care provided to children. Also ensure that children's views, on all aspects of their care, are gathered and considered. This also relates to ensuring that all staff complete all relevant training for their roles. This requirement was made at this last inspection and is restated.	
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to—	12 September 2021

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; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iii)(d)(g)) This specifically relates to ensuring that admissions and discharges to and from the home are well planned and that children are supported. This also relates to ensuring that impact risk assessments consider all relevant risk factors and the interplay between children. This also relates to ensuring that children's care plans are in place quickly, that they are detailed and correct, and that staff read and follow them.	
The registered person must ensure that— children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv)) This specifically relates to the home's gardens. Children should have unrestricted access to this space unless it is unsafe to do so.	12 September 2021
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider—	12 September 2021

is an organisation or a partnership. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)) This specifically relates to the registration of a suitable registered manager for the home.	
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff obtain the level 3 qualification within the required time frame.	12 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that— 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— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.	12 September 2021

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to sanctions and ensuring that all sanctions are appropriate. Also, that the manager reviews their effectiveness and that sanctions are explained to the children.	
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; 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 specifically relates to ensuring that staff rosters are up to date and maintained in line with regulatory requirements.	12 September 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC476270

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Limited

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

Responsible individual: Clare Hadfield

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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