

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 owned by a large private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to five children. Children are likely to have emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced trauma.

There is a newly appointed manager who is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

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

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

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: 4 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/05/2023	Full	Good
08/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
05/10/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/07/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Shortfalls were identified in relation to restraint practice, which have impacted on children's experiences of living in the home. Leaders and managers have not always taken appropriate action to ensure that staff are provided with reflection and learning to improve practice. This means that the overall experience for children living in the home has been affected.

At the time of the inspection, there was only one child living in the home. Since the last inspection, one child has moved out due to concerns about criminal exploitation and another child who moved into the home has recently moved out. Thorough planning supported their moves

A monitoring visit took place in January 2024 which highlighted concerns about the environment. This specifically related to delays in repairs, particularly in children's bedrooms. The manager has since taken steps to address this issue, however further work and repair is required to ensure that a more warm, homely environment is provided for children.

Despite the shortfalls children make progress in areas of their lives. For example, one child who has been not been in education for a significant period of time has recently moved to a new school. Staff are working closely with school staff and building positive relationships to ensure that the child has a positive experience. In addition, staff are supporting the child to complete homework to help them close the gap on missed learning.

Staff ensure that children's physical health needs are met. Children are registered with local health services and attend appointments when needed. Staff ensure that children are kept busy and incorporate daily exercise into children's routines through participation in activities. Furthermore, children have support for their emotional well-being. One child has regular visits from their well-being mentor and is due to start weekly therapy sessions.

Children are supported to spend time with family. Staff work closely with placing authorities to promote time with family that is positive and safe for children. This ensures that children continue to build relationships and attachments with those significant to them.

Staff encourage children to take part in activities. Children enjoy various activities with staff, such as swimming, cinema, a sea life centre and trampoline parks. Staff have recently created a memory book and photo album to capture positive moments and memories that will stay with the child after they leave.

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

Significant shortfalls were identified that have impacted on children's overall experiences. For example, on two occasions a child has been restrained by staff who have not received the appropriate training. During one occasion this included four staff restraining a child on the floor. The use of this technique is not proportionate in relation to the child and is not part of the organisation's preferred method of training. This has potential to place children at risk of harm.

In addition to the above, leaders and managers have not always ensured that staff have been spoken with following the use of physical intervention. On occasions, where debriefs have been completed with staff, there are significant delays. Therefore, staff have not always been provided with sufficient opportunities for reflection or challenge regarding the use of restraint. This is a missed opportunity for learning. Furthermore, reporting on physical intervention is not always clear and accurate.

There have been a high number of allegations since the last inspection. Leaders and managers ensure that there is usually a good response to allegations and work closely with safeguarding agencies to ensure that the appropriate process is followed. However, in contrast, on one occasion, when an allegation was made against the manager, this was not escalated to a senior manager in line with their policy. Therefore, the manager had oversight of an allegation that was made against them. These actions do not ensure impartiality and potentially compromise the outcome for the child.

Children's risks are identified well. Risk assessments and safety plans provide clear guidance for staff. Despite this, there have been occasions when staff have not followed the strategies in place. For example, one child should receive support from two staff, however, on two occasions, staff did not provide sufficient levels of supervision which led to safeguarding concerns. This poor understanding of risk management strategies has the potential to place children at risk of harm and impact on their experience.

Staff are not always safely vetted prior to working in the home. The manager has failed to secure relevant documents such as, full employment history, explanation of gaps in employment and reasons for leaving a role with children or vulnerable adults for one agency staff member. This means that children have been cared for by staff who have not had the required checks to work with children.

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

Since the last inspection there has been a change in management. The previous manager left the home on the 21 February 2024 to manage another home within the company. A new manager has since been appointed.

Leaders and managers have several monitoring systems in place, unfortunately they have not been effective in highlighting or addressing areas of concern or shortfalls. As a result, the quality of care provided to children has not been effectively reviewed. This means that there are missed opportunities to learn, implement changes and develop the service provided to children.

The manager is in the process of making significant changes, providing a greater focus on a trauma-informed and therapeutic approach. She is being closely supported by the responsible individual and quality manager. Leaders and managers are now clear about the areas that require improvement and are committed to ensuring that standards are raised moving forward.

There have been some challenges in relation to staffing sufficiency since the last inspection. Four staff have recently moved on which also coincided with increased staffing levels for one child. This placed a dependency on use of agency staff to cover shortfalls in the rota. However, since the new manager has started, there has been an effective recruitment drive which now means the home has sufficient staff to meet the needs of the child. Staff spoke positively about the recent change in management and said that they felt supported by the new manager.

Staff receive a wide range of training including a ten-day induction program. In addition, staff complete online modules that cover mandatory and training specific to meeting children's needs. Development workshops are now also being provided during team meetings to enable staff to understand and meet the needs children more effectively. Staff supervision meetings are regular and there is a plan to improve the delivery of supervision in the future.

Positive relationships have been established with professionals. Leaders and managers work closely with children's social workers and other professionals involved in their care. Feedback from professionals during the visit was positive about the experience their children have had whilst living in the home.

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 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)) This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that staff follow the safeguarding strategies in relation to staffing ratios as detailed in the children's risk management plans, safety plans and protocols.	22 May 2024
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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)) This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that only staff with appropriate training perform restrictive physical intervention on children. This also requires leaders and managers to ensure that only physical intervention that falls within their trained model are used with children.	22 May 2024
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	22 May 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that there is appropriate oversight and management of allegations made by children. When an allegation is against the manager, this is appropriately escalated to the relevant person in line with the safeguarding policy.	
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)) This specifically relates to ensuring that leaders and managers are using monitoring systems effectively to highlight and address any areas of concern.	22 May 2024
The registered person must ensure that— 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i))	22 May 2024

This specifically relates to ensuring that leaders and managers are completing de-briefs with staff following the use of restrictive physical interventions and within appropriate timescales	
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to — meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to ensuring that the registered person continues to make improvements to the environment.	29 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion, and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This specifically relates to ensuring that reports documented in the home are clear and accurate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Deborah Robertson-Kesterton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024