

SC476289

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides long-term care and therapy for up to five children aged between four and 11 years old who have emotional and/or behavioural needs. The registered provider is a private company, operating a number of children's homes across the country.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 August 2019

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: 14 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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 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; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv))	30/09/2019
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 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)(d))	30/09/2019
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.	30/09/2019

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)) This is in relation to the poor state of the exterior of the building.	
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. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b), (2)(a))	30/09/2019

Recommendations

- Ensure staff skills for safeguarding include being able to identify that children may be at risk and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 43, paragraph 9.10)

This is in relation to staff knowledge about how children can be criminally exploited.
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take into account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- 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 a child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child.
(‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

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

A significant increase in behavioural incidents occurred after the admission of one particular child. Although he has now moved to another placement, this unsettled period has impacted on other children's experiences. There are examples of children being bullied and targeted, although staff have always been there to support and protect them. Children have seen their home repeatedly and significantly damaged. They have witnessed some violent incidents. However, children have never been left unsupported or unprotected, and some have continued to make progress.

Not all children have made good progress in their education. One child was admitted to the home without a school placement and did not attend school for the duration of their 15-week placement. Another child's education attendance declined when they became influenced by their peer. Until then, they had been attending school and making progress.

Placing authorities and professionals generally report very positively on children's progress. The home's therapeutic approach helps children to come to terms with what has happened to them in their past and to grow in confidence. This has a positive and significant impact on their progress. This progress has been somewhat undermined by the recent high level of incidents in the home and by the many recent staff changes. It is testament to the hard work and dedication of the core staff and managers that children's progress has not been more severely disrupted.

Some children's experiences have been good. They have enjoyed one-to-one time with staff and been out on activities with their individual key worker. Two children have been on a holiday this summer with their chosen staff members. A recent change to the group of children has enabled a calmer period, and children have started to settle down again.

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

One child's risk-taking behaviour was much more significant than had been indicated on their assessment information at the point of admission. However, the assessment information did make it clear that the child was likely to influence younger children to become involved in exploitative situations. The child's behaviour did impact on another child, such that they were drawn into some new and very significant risk-taking behaviours. These behaviours included regularly climbing onto the house roof, threatening staff and going missing. Missing children are reported to have been swimming in a lake and playing inside a derelict building. Staff were unable to reduce children's risk-taking behaviours. This situation is improving, now that the group of children has been changed. Staff are supporting children through some very helpful, high-quality, one-to-one sessions about risks such as 'stranger danger', fire starting and going missing.

Staff have been patient, kind and respectful, even when being targeted or threatened. They call the police appropriately when necessary to protect themselves or children from harm. Children have not been inappropriately criminalised, and working relationships with the police have been very good. Staff have made every effort to protect children during this difficult time and continue to do so.

Staff always look for children when they go missing. They are proactive in trying to prevent them from leaving in the first place. Children do not always receive a return-home interview after they have been missing. This is a missed opportunity to hear the child's views and to find out where they were when they were missing. The manager explained that some local authorities have not seen this as a priority, but she has not escalated the concerns.

More clarity is needed on some health and safety risks in the garden. The home has suffered some subsidence, which has been fixed, but the manager was unaware why there were cracks in the wall by the kitchen door. Also, a loose manhole cover had been blocked off with a plant pot but children still had access to it. The manager was unaware if this was safe or not. A pillar to a wall on the side drive of the property appeared to be cracking and the manager was not clear if this was safe. If children were to climb on these areas, they could be at risk of harm.

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

Responding to high-risk behaviours and incidents has been the manager's priority. This has meant that some aspects of management oversight have had less focus. An example is the exterior of the building. The garden and grounds do not provide a pleasant environment for the children to relax or play in. There are many cigarette butts on the drive, and an empty, discarded cigarette packet. There are marks and stains on the house brickwork and rubbish and debris on the front drive. There is a broken tumble dryer on the drive, adding to the picture of an unkempt home. In addition, children have painted on the garage door and walls. This looks unsightly and does not give a good first impression to either visitors or the children. The external appearance of the home does not demonstrate that children are being taught about the importance of respecting their home and property.

The manager made a decision to admit a child when their assessment information suggested that their behaviour would be likely to have an impact on other children's behaviour. Another child's progress was significantly disrupted. The manager and responsible individual have reflected on this and are already thinking about better ways to proceed with future admissions.

There has been a high turnover of staff. Seven have left the core team since the last inspection, in March this year. The staff team has not been settled enough to provide consistently high-quality care to the children. High staff turnover has been an issue in the home for two years.

There have been several shortfalls in some staff's practice. The manager has addressed

these through her supervision and performance management systems. Although all staff have basic training to be able to care for the children, some have no experience of working in a children's home or with children who present high-risk behaviours. Some are reported to have been 'out of their depth'. It will be some time before each staff member is experienced in the work, yet newer staff always work with a more experienced staff member.

The home has been through a very turbulent time in the last two years. The manager has made many changes and secured much improvement since she joined the home a year ago. There are some shortfalls, yet there is evidence that some children have made some significant progress under her care. The previous requirement about staff training is met. However, not all staff have sufficient skill and knowledge about how children can be criminally exploited.

Staff do not always make good records in children's files. Some of the language used by staff has the potential to stigmatise children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC476289

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambian Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: The Cambian Group, 4th floor, Waterfront Manbre Wharf, Manbre Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9RH

Responsible individual: Clare Hadfield

Registered manager: Carole Sloane

Inspector(s)

Caroline Brailsford, social care inspector

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