

2611190

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to 20 children between eight and 18 years who have autism spectrum disorder. There are currently seven children living at the home.

There is no registered manager in post. An acting manager has been covering the home since the registered manager left in July 2022. A permanent manager has been appointed to commence in December 2022.

The home shares the same site as a separately registered school provision. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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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	inadequate
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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: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The home has been through an unsettled period, which is largely due to changes in staffing arrangements and to the management of the home. There has been a delay in recruiting a registered manager. This has now been achieved and a new manager is due to commence in December 2022.

Educational progress is evidenced for some children, who have gained qualifications. Some children have been positively supported to progress to further educational placements and have achieved very well academically in the school. For other children, their progress has regressed, and they have not engaged with education for some time. Some children's educational arrangements are left to drift. There has not been a proactive response to engaging all children in their education.

Not all children are actively engaged in activities in the home. Some children are spending excessive lengths of time gaming in their rooms and sleeping.

The environment appears institutionalised. In one area, furniture and items have been removed so that staff are more able to manage a child's behaviour. This has had a negative impact on the other children.

Some children are being helped to improve their emotional health and well-being. For some children, this support has helped them to engage in education, improved their access to the community, developed their independence and helped them to have increased family time.

Celebrating diversity is a strength. Staff are sensitive when supporting children around gender identity. Children are encouraged and supported in a variety of ways to celebrate their identity.

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

Several changes in leadership and management arrangements have led to fragility in the management of safeguarding processes. For example, when the inspectors were reviewing physical interventions, there was not a clear and coordinated approach from managers to analysing this information. There was no clear accountability for who was responsible for oversight of these records.

For one physical intervention, a child received a debrief from the staff member who carried out the physical intervention rather than an impartial person. This had not been picked up by leaders.

Leaders understand the process for managing allegations against staff and responding to complaints. When a child makes a complaint, their views are taken seriously, and they are listened to. Staff ensure that safeguarding processes are followed effectively, and relevant agencies are notified.

Staff are not always clear about plans for children. A child who spends long periods in their room was receiving meals there. The child's social worker was clear that this should not be the case. Risk assessments are not always clear about key actions for staff, such as bedroom checks and regular checks on a child who self-harms. Children have not been affected by this shortfall but there is the potential for negative impact if this is not put right.

Managers have not ensured that all safety measures have been taken to reduce the risks of fire. One bedroom has overloaded sockets. Electrical testing of some equipment is out of date. Systems are not in place to ensure that all electrical equipment brought into the home is safe.

Leaders and managers have established robust recruitment checks. This means that managers can be sure that staff are fully vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the registered manager left, there have been significant changes in leadership. There has also been instability in staffing arrangements. The delay in recruiting a permanent registered manager has impacted on the effectiveness of the service. The provider has been unable to identify an appropriately experienced candidate until recently.

The provider has identified a responsible individual and support from within the organisation; however, this has not been sufficient to ensure good leadership. Experienced and consistent day-to-day oversight and leadership are required to ensure that the service is stable and that there is clear and consistent leadership and direction.

A child scored the home 'three out of 10'. He described his living area as poor. Children are not always comfortable at the home. The impact of some children's behaviours is significant on the settling of others. This impact has not been fully explored by leaders.

There has been an incident of poor placement matching of a child, at a time when there was staffing instability. The placement was agreed by senior managers when the setting was vulnerable due to significant changes to leadership. The placement caused disruption to the child and other children were affected. The responsible individual identified this as an issue and decided that there will be no new admissions until the matter is properly resolved.

One child has not received their allocated pocket money and holiday money. This took several attempts by a social worker to follow up with leaders and managers.

This was rectified. However, there has been no management review of other children's finances to ensure that financial regulations are being followed and that children are receiving what they are entitled to.

Not all staff have had opportunity to receive all essential training. The acting manager was unclear about which staff members had done training in some areas and which had not. The manager's oversight of training is not effective. It is difficult to establish which staff are equipped to meet children's needs and which need further training.

Some staff have not been receiving regular formal supervision. This was a requirement made at the last inspection and has not yet been met. Despite this shortfall, staff say that they feel supported.

The acting manager and core staff demonstrate a good understanding of the children's needs. Staff are working hard to try and maintain positive standards of care for children.

During the inspection, the organisation acknowledged the leadership and management shortfalls and how these have impacted on children. They recognised the need for stronger leadership and management at the home. Senior leaders devised an urgent action plan. This includes immediate and robust senior management oversight. Leaders acknowledge the need for improvement and demonstrate a strong commitment to this.

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
<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>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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that risk assessments are reviewed and up to date, and that staff are aware of any changes.</p>	25 November 2022
<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 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)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the impact of children's behaviours on each other and ensuring that environmental risks are assessed and appropriate action is taken.</p>	25 November 2022
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p>	25 November 2022

<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 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))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	4 January 2022
<p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	4 January 2022
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	25 November 2022

<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 work as a team where appropriate;</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>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))</p>	
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))</p> <p>In particular, there must be stable and consistent management oversight with clear lines of accountability.</p>	<p>25 November 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support. Where possible, this should be provided by a person who the child chooses. Children looked after are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. The home must also meet children's basic day-to-day

needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. This is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2611190

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Alison Priddle

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector
Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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