

# 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 owned and operated by a large national provider. It is registered to provide care for up to 20 children with learning disabilities. The home has a school on site. Only the residential provision was inspected.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified and experienced.

Four children are currently resident at the home, with two children at home for the summer holidays. The two children remaining were spoken to and their views have helped inform this report.

### Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 2023

**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 July 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2023	Full	Inadequate
02/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/02/2022	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

The progress and experiences for children have been affected by an unsettled period that involved several incidents of children causing damage to the home. Children's behaviours have proved challenging for staff. Things have now started to improve, and children are much happier and more settled.

Children have benefited from a recent holiday. The children were provided with a range of activities that have had a positive impact on their emotional well-being. Holiday memories have been photographed and shared with the children, family members and external professionals. Children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences and what this meant to them. The holiday also allowed the children time to reflect on some of the events at the home, in terms of more challenging behaviours, and were able to consider how things can improve.

Children have positive relationships with staff and have been well supported. Children said that staff have kept them safe. The children could also identify a trusted adult they could talk to if they had any worries or concerns. The views obtained from professionals were varied, with one saying the child was making 'significant' progress in terms of developing their independence and social skills, while another raised concerns about communication and providing information.

A child had an unexpected ending to their time at the home as the manager did not feel they could continue to keep children safe. Additional support was offered from the child's placing authority to help during a period of crisis. However, the manager felt unable to safely maintain this child's placement. Leaders and managers have undertaken a review of the child's time at the home, and this has identified some lessons to be learned, particularly around the management of incidents and staff's knowledge and skills.

At times, children's plans do not reflect their individual needs. This means that staff do not always understand how best to support and care for the children. Staff are not provided with guidance or role modelling by more senior staff or managers in order to help them develop their skills and knowledge. Staff do not routinely read children's updated plans, and this could lead to inconsistent care being provided.

Children are supported to stay in contact with their families and people who are important to them. Staff have been staying in touch with children who have gone home for the summer holidays. This helps to maintain the children's relationships with staff and helps them to transition back into the home.

Some damage caused to the home has yet to be repaired. This includes a broken window in a living room used by children. This does not provide children with a homely environment.

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

There have been several significant incidents recently and these have not been consistently well-managed. Children's individual risk assessments and support plans had not been updated in response to these incidents. This prevents staff from having the guidance they need on how best to support a child when they are struggling to manage their emotions. Staff lack the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage incidents safely. Police intervention has had to be called on to support staff with managing behaviour.

Children's individual risk assessments do not contain all relevant information that is required. Further, they are not written in line with children's individual needs. This means that not all risk factors are taken into consideration, which prevents appropriate support from being put in place. Children's behaviour support plans and day-to-day care practice is often disjointed. Verbal narratives do not always match with written information about the children, and there is a lack of effectively risk assessment.

The recording, management and oversight of incidents have improved. Children have been offered the opportunity to discuss and reflect on incidents and their feelings about these incidents. Staff have participated in debriefs following incidents. However, these are not always completed in a timely way. This is a missed opportunity to reflect and learn from practice following incidents.

The security system for checking visitor identification is not yet robust. For example, the inspector's identification was not checked. Additionally, staff were not vigilant in supervising a child who accompanied inspectors to find a manager. This has the potential to expose children to risk.

Safer recruitment practices have improved. The manager has more effective oversight of files on staff. Temporary staff are used to cover shortfalls on shifts and for the most part relevant information is maintained and accessible. The manager has introduced an induction for agency staff, which includes safeguarding and information about the children. This gives agency staff better understanding of the children they are working with.

All staff have received safeguarding training. However, one senior member of staff was not aware of the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures. This has the potential to place children at risk of harm.

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

The manager does not yet have an effective quality assurance system. Additionally, some management tasks have not been completed. There have been several factors impacting on their ability to complete the required tasks. This has prevented the

manager from making meaningful improvements and implementing robust quality assurance systems.

The home has been through some turbulence and the manager's actions have safeguard children from harm. The members of the leadership and management team want to develop a learning culture and so they undertook an analysis of a child's time at the home when the placement came to an end. They have identified some lessons to be learned, particularly around staff practice and sufficiency.

The manager prioritised the children's needs in organising a much-needed holiday. This has proved beneficial in developing relationships and bonds between the children and staff. The manager has also made some progress in implementing new systems to support his oversight and management of the home. However, the manager has not utilised available resources in managing difficult incidents, nor has this led to the development of effective support plans. This is a missed opportunity to improve the support plans for children in order to help staff in managing more difficult incidents.

Staff have not benefited from regular professional supervision or developmental appraisals. This limits opportunities to reflect and learn from practice and in the wider development of the team. The format for supervision meetings has improved. This now allows for reflective discussions about children. Staff have completed mandatory training. However, they have yet to complete training that would provide knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs that may improve their skills in working with and understanding individual children.

Staffing levels are low and there is a lack of shift leaders and suitably trained staff. Agency staff provide additional support daily. There is a risk that this could lead to inconsistency in practice, particularly around supporting children in crisis. This also prevents children forming relationships with a consistent staff team.

Staff are currently shared across three homes on the same site. There are often unclear shift plans for staff. This limits staff's understanding of the expectations of them when working and knowing which children they will be caring for. This has contributed to children's anxieties becoming heightened as they do not know which staff are caring for them. Rotas do not always reflect which staff have been working. This impacts on the manager's oversight of staff employed to work at the home.

Senior leaders have improved oversight of the home and have been providing additional support and guidance. There is a clear action plan in place to address the required improvements.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who–</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to–</p> <p>ensure that staff–</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background;</p> <p>ensure that any care that is arranged or provided for a child that–</p> <p>satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The conditions are–</p> <p>that the care is delivered by a person who–</p> <p>has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iv)(d)(ii) (3)(c)(i))</p> <p>This relates to the registered person ensuring that all children’s care plans contain all known and relevant information, are read and understood by staff and that staff delivering care are suitably trained and experienced.</p>	<p>30 September 2023</p>

<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on–</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure–</p> <p>that staff–</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; and</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(ix)(x)(xi))</p> <p>In particular this relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are being supported through supervision and role modelling by leaders and managers and are being sufficiently trained to understand children’s behaviours and needs.</p>	<p>30 September 2023</p>
<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>30 September 2023</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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and</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)(i)(iii)(v)(b))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are reading and following risk assessments and that risk assessments take into consideration the child’s individual needs and levels of understanding. This also relates to staff understanding the safeguarding policies in place. It also relates to ensuring there is a protocol in place for visitors and guests that ensures children are safeguarded.</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>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>30 September 2023</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; and</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)(b)(c)(d)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the registered person ensuring that there are sufficiently trained and experienced staff on each shift to provide safe care to children and that rotas accurately reflect staff working in the home and the shift plan in place. It also relates to the manager having effective oversight of the home and using information to make and sustain improvements using all available resources.</p>	
<p>The registered person must–</p> <p>ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees–</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c))</p>	30 September 2023

## Recommendations

- The registered person should develop effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice and 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:** 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:** Claire Murr

## Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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