

# SC065261

Registered provider: Cambian Autism Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home is registered for up to 60 children with autism spectrum disorder and/or learning disabilities.

The service operates as a residential special school that also provides accommodation for 52 weeks of the year. As a result, it is registered as a children's home. The home provides care across nine houses. The home is owned by a private national organisation.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 23 June 2020.

### Inspection dates: 12 to 13 October 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 serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

**Date of last inspection:** 20 July 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** restriction of accommodation

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
20/07/2021	Full	Inadequate
25/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/01/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

Over several years, leaders and managers have failed to provide all children with good quality care and consequently, for some children, their experiences have been poor. Weaknesses in the quality of care and knowledge and skills of staff found at previous inspections, continue to be a concern. This is the second full inspection in 2021 when the home has been judged as inadequate.

Leaders and managers have not tackled effectively, long-standing inconsistencies in the quality of care that children receive. For example, too many children continue to be looked after by temporary or new staff who do not always have the knowledge and experience to meet their needs. Too often, this impacts negatively on the quality of these children's experiences.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff in some houses are ambitious for the children. These children are not being given the calm structured routines, care, and support needed to help them to make good progress. In addition, some children live in houses that are poorly maintained and unclean.

Not all children's plans contain detailed up-to-date information on how staff are expected to meet the children's needs. Targets set for some children are too broad and risk assessments are not clear or concise. As a result, staff are not provided with sufficient information about how they are to meet children's needs, how to support their development, or on how keep children safe by managing and mitigating risk. Some parents remain concerned about the lack of progress being made.

Other children receive care from staff who can meet their needs and most children live in houses that are well-furnished and homely. As a result, these children are having more positive experiences and are making better progress.

Typically, children are provided with a varied diet that meets their individual cultural, dietary and health needs. Leaders and managers are considering ways to improve children's dining experiences.

Children are supported to attend a range of leisure activities. These include swimming, walks and trips out within the local community. However, on occasions, staffing shortages have impacted on some children's daily activities.

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

Children's safety continues to be compromised because turnover of staff means that some children do not receive care from a consistent team of staff who know them well and understands their specific needs.

Three children are living in rooms that are unhygienic and hazardous. Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to remedy these concerns.

Since the last inspection, the head of care has been appointed as the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Since the monitoring visit in August 2021, there have been two reported safeguarding concerns. The DSL has worked closely with the safeguarding agencies to manage and resolve these safeguarding concerns. However, some safeguarding records are not well maintained. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a clear audit trail of what action has been taken, when the action was taken and what the outcome was.

Fire evacuation drills take place regularly. However, records of these evacuations do not consistently detail the names of the staff who have engaged in the fire evacuation. This means that leaders and managers do not know whether all temporary and new staff know what to do in an emergency.

Managers have taken action in response to a concern raised by one child's parents and the investigation into the concerns has not yet concluded. However, complaint records do not detail whether the parents are happy with the actions taken so far.

Behavioural incidents have reduced in number since the last inspection. Children are only physically restrained as a last resort and for a minimal amount of time. Social stories are used effectively, and staff are provided with an opportunity to reflect on their action and identify potential triggers for behavioural incidents, to help reduce reoccurrence.

The management of medication has improved, and audits are now effective.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection in July 2021. At that inspection, Ofsted made statutory requirements relating to the quality of care, safeguarding and leadership and management. As a result of the seriousness of these concerns, Ofsted restricted the number of children who could live in the home. At the monitoring visit, inspectors found that leaders and managers at all levels had not taken timely and decisive action to address these concerns.

At this inspection, inspectors found that while some improvements have been made, leaders and managers have still not taken sufficient action to address all the concerns. As a result, the restriction on the number of children who can live in the home remains in place. Ofsted will continue to monitor this restriction and the ongoing performance of the home.

The registered manager is not meeting the conditions of her registration because she has ineffective oversight of the quality-of-care children receive and the operation of the home. While there is an experienced management team in place, this team has not ensured that every house operates safely and effectively. In some houses,

this lack of ownership by managers has meant that the children who live in them do not always receive consistent, good quality care and accommodation.

The recruitment and retention of staff continues to be problematic. In recent months, senior leaders have introduced positive employment incentives. As a result, recruitment is slowly improving. However, at this point it is still too early to have had an impact on improving the quality of care for all children. Exit interviews are now being completed. However, information gained is not routinely followed up or used to improve staff retention.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all staff receive regular good-quality formal supervision. Records are not always well maintained. They do not always reflect the discussions held or agreed actions when concerns are raised. This limits managers ability to drive improvement in the quality of care received by children.

Feedback gained from social workers is mixed. Some social workers raised concerns about poor communication, delays in reporting incidents and children's access to the community. In comparison, some social workers spoke positively about children's progress and the care and support children receive.

As a result of this inspection, requirements set at the previous inspection in relation to the quality of care, safeguarding and leadership and management remain in place. New requirements in relation to the quality of record keeping and the safety of the homes physical environment have been added.

## 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 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>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</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 to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</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)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(vii) (3)(c)(i))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that there are sufficient permanent staff to meet the care plan needs of the children.</p> <p>In addition, leaders and managers should ensure that the home is maintained in good condition and is clean, and repairs to damage are actioned without delay.</p>	<p>3 September 2021</p>

<p>This requirement was made at the last visit and is restated.</p>	
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>develop the child’s interests and hobbies;</p> <p>participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child’s interests and preferences; and</p> <p>make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and</p> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child’s interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staffing shortages do not impact on children’s opportunities to enjoy meaningful and enjoyable activities in the community.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last visit and is restated.</p>	<p>3 September 2021</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 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))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last visit and is restated.</p>	<p>3 September 2021</p>
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	<p>1 December 2021</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with and act in accordance with the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that child protection records provide a clear audit trail setting out what action has been taken, when the action was taken and what the outcome was.</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 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>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p>	<p>3 September 2021</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)(c)(d)(f)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that the monitoring carried out by the manager and independent visitor is effective.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last visit and is restated.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, the provider should ensure that all care plans are clear, concise and relevant to the child’s current needs and behaviours.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last visit and is restated.</p>	3 September 2021
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that fire evacuation records include details of all the adults who engaged in the evacuation.</p>	1 December 2021

## 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:** SC065261

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Cambian Autism Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar  
EN6 1AG

**Responsible individual:** Paul Kniveton

**Registered manager:** Melanie Micklewright

## Inspectors

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector  
Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector  
Kendra Bell, Her Majesty's Inspector

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