

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC459857
Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	St Christophers Fellowship
Registered person address	1 Putney High Street London SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual	Jonathan Joseph Michael Farrow
Registered manager	Nicola Helen Boyce
Date of last inspection	20/09/2013

Inspection date	29/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Behaviour of young people is well managed in the home. This is achieved through comprehensive behaviour management plans and assessment which are subject to weekly review. This helps young people to make positive changes in their behaviour and helps them to improve their social skills.

All young people placed at the home have made excellent progress in relation to their starting points educationally. All young people are now attending some form of education or training. They enjoy good health and the home ensures that therapeutic support from professional services is made available when needed. The number of occasions when children go missing has reduced.

The staff group are well supported and managed. Staff receive good induction and ongoing training in all core areas of their work. Staff are robustly vetted before working at the home and are well supervised. The home has effective internal monitoring systems and regularly reviews the quality of care offered to young people.

The manager and staff have devised a comprehensive system of risk assessment for

individual young people, activities and in regard to the location of the home. However, the manager is yet to complete and submit to the regulatory body a formal, comprehensive risk assessment of its locality as required in the regulations.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated and managed by a charity and provider of social housing. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for no more than eight children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties age range from 12 - 17 years old, with two of the eight bedrooms used as emergency placement only for 140 days each per calendar year.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2013	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
31 (2001)	ensure that the home review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises at least once in every calendar year. Specifically, that the manager carries out an initial assessment by 31st December 2014 (Regulation 31 (1A))	28/01/2015

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people good

Young people are supported in developing positive self-views of themselves by the warm and friendly approach of management and staff. Individual young people have key workers who are fully conversant with their care needs and who have a good knowledge of their family connections and help them to maintain contact. This knowledge is shared with the wider staff team at weekly 'reflection' meetings which were developed in response to recommendations made at the previous inspection. A purpose of these meetings is the reviewing of young people's progress in meeting the home's behavioural expectations. Behaviour management systems are robust and young people are aware of, and accept as fair, the expectations of behaviour in the home.

The emotional health of young people is promoted by good links and good communication with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services teams and this helps staff to support young people with specific mental health needs. Young people benefit from a dedicated drug and alcohol support worker who will do individual work with young people. This further supports young people who may have difficulties in this area of their lives.

The manager and staff make an exceptional effort to help young people to maintain contact with their families where this is appropriate, or to understand why this is not possible at this time in their lives. Good arrangements are in place to support older young people to move on to independent living, and the organisation has a number of semi-independent living provisions which young people can easily access and are able to move on to.

The home makes significant efforts to try to ensure that young people placed in the home receive and attend full-time education. Although this has not been achieved in every case, the majority of young people placed have improved their previous attendance records. This gives young people opportunities to obtain formal skills and qualifications.

Young people benefit from focused, routine health care. Other young people who have more complex health issues are helped to develop a good understanding of their own medical needs. The home offers young people who smoke support to stop and none of the young people who smoke are allowed to do so within the home.

There are numerous forums available where young people can express their opinions about the quality of their care and make positive changes to their day to day living arrangements. These include weekly house meetings for young people, key worker

sessions, and care plan review meetings. Young people have a real voice in menu and activity planning. Young people told the inspector that they really enjoy the food and that there is plenty of it. Mealtimes are a good feature of the home as residents and staff share a large dining room table and this is where issues of the day are discussed. This helps to provide young people with a sense of ownership and belonging in the home. All staff have been trained in food hygiene and some of the young people take the opportunity to develop cooking skills by helping with food preparation.

Relationships between peers appear generally positive. Staff achieve this by undertaking individual work with young people and there are high staff/child ratios in place to achieve this.

Young people are supported by staff in attending their own areas of interest both within and outside of the home. This includes such pursuits as kick boxing, gym and piano tutoring. Attending external clubs and societies helps young people to engage in activities in the wider community and to develop their own areas of interest, and this promotes feelings of self-worth.

Quality of care

good

Some of the young people living in the home may occasionally present challenging behaviour. The behaviour management systems within the home are generally effective. The home works hard to sustain placements but where unacceptable behaviour negatively affects the lives of the other young people placed, the home will terminate placements. Placing authorities and schools comment favourably on the quality of care. One head teacher commented, 'The home is head and shoulders above other children's homes I deal with...there is a high standard of care.' One placing authority social worker commented, 'The home have managed to hold on to a very challenging young man...remarkable.'

The home has developed a detailed and comprehensive system for assessing and reviewing individual young people's care needs and this results in good quality care planning. Weekly 'reflective practice' meetings ensure that care planning is responsive to young people's individual needs and aspirations. Young people are knowledgeable about how to complain about, or contest any aspect of their care planning and know that they may have access to independent advocates. Independent reviewing officers say that the home prepares extremely well for review meetings, and that written reports from the home are of an extremely high standard.

Key workers maintain effective contact with the schools and educational establishments that young people attend, and staff always attend Personal Education Plan meetings. They also support young people by attending parents' evenings or

school activities. Staff support young people in doing homework. Young people's routine health needs are well met and benefit from timely dental and sight check-ups. Medication processes are well-followed and all staff have been trained in the administration of medication.

The home is well-located and the furnishing and décor of the home provide a homely environment that is clean and tidy. Any damage to fixtures and fittings is quickly repaired. The home provides a spacious, pleasant, and homely environment both internally and in the garden. Young people have their own room keys and are able to personalise their rooms according to their own taste. This again promotes their feelings of self worth and ownership of the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say that they feel safe and are safe. The home has a clear policy on dealing with bullying and young people say that they are confident that any bullying would be dealt with appropriately by staff if they reported it. One young person said, "Bullying has been a problem but staff quickly sorted it out". Young people know the procedure for making complaints and any complaints are effectively recorded. There were two complaints raised by young people since the time of the previous inspection, these were clearly documented and effectively responded to by the home.

Vetting and recruitment procedures for new staff help to ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable people. Verbal verification of written references takes place. All staff undertake training in safeguarding young people and this training is regularly updated. All staff are trained in the use of physical restraint and rigorous recording systems are in place to record whenever incidents requiring restraint occur. The numbers of times staff have had to physically restrain young people is minimal. Sanctions are properly recorded. The manager conducts audits of these records to ensure that inappropriate practice does not occur. Young people are generally of the view that sanctions are fair and appropriate. Young people have occasionally gone missing from this home, although this has reduced in relation to their starting points. The home is aware of the possible dangers this behaviour poses and have formed good relationships with local police. An effective missing young person's protocol is in place.

Health and safety checks are routinely carried out on the home and this helps to keep the living environment safe for young people. There is an elevated fire escape stairway at the rear of the house which can be accessed via fire doors. This could possibly be misused by young people and present a danger of falling. An effective risk assessment has been undertaken and control measures are in place to manage identified risk. Fire records indicate that fire checks are appropriately completed. Fire drills and evacuations are routinely carried out, including night time evacuations. The

management have effective risk assessments in place to minimise the danger of fire in the home.

Any visitors or maintenance staff calling to the home are supervised by staff and are not allowed access to young people. All staff have been trained in first aid, first aid boxes are in place and staff are aware that there is a clear system in place for the recording of accidents.

The home maintains good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). There have been no recent safeguarding concerns about the home identified by the LADO. Risk assessments are in place for each young person, and for the living environment. The locality risk assessment of the home is partially completed and has not yet been submitted to the regulatory body. However, the manager of the home is aware of risks in the area and this is identified on individual risk assessments.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has a professional social work qualification and many years experience in child care practice and management of the home. Staff receive regular supervision and there are weekly team meetings. The majority of care staff have an appropriate qualification for working with children and young people, or are undertaking this award. An induction programme is in place for new staff and an ongoing training programme is in place which ensures that all staff are properly trained in the necessary core skills of their work. All staff undertake an annual personal development plan which identifies their training and development needs. All of these measure help to ensure that young people receive a good standard of care from a well trained and supervised staff team.

In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, the home has effectively reviewed its assessments of need for young people admitted to the home. Especially, the behaviour management need assessments which are now subject to weekly review.

An Independent Visitor conducts monthly monitoring visits to the home and provides the management with comprehensive and clearly written reports indicating any areas of necessary development and improvement. There was evidence that the home has acted upon the recommendations of these reports. For example, the home had immediately repaired recent damage caused to the home. There are quarterly reviews of the quality of care as required by regulation. Copies of both the monthly monitoring reports and the quarterly reviews are sent to the regulatory body as are any notifications of events required by the regulations. The organisation conducts an annual development plan for the home. Internal review of the home is indicative of

good service development which is in the best interest of young people.

The service is proactive in engaging with other professionals to promote young people's welfare, such as working with placing authorities, schools, specialist therapeutic services, and the local police. Placing authorities appreciate the commitment of the home in maintaining stable placements and the home's high standard of communication. This demonstrates that the home is effectively and efficiently managed, and that the interests of young people are at the centre of the home's care.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.