

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	6 June 2016
Unique reference number	1159755
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	St Christopher's Fellowship
Registered provider address	St Christopher's Fellowship, 1 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual	Jonathan Farrow
Registered manager	Parveen Banga
Inspector	Bridget Goddard

Inspection date	6 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young women living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young women are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1159755

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- There is a consistent and committed registered manager in place who leads by example.
- Staff have a reflective and considered approach to their work, and are persistent in obtaining the best for young women.
- There is minimum use of police to assist with behaviour, and little use of restraint or restriction of liberty.
- Internal supervision, clinical supervision and training are of high quality, and are successful in supporting and stretching staff.
- Young women are kept safer than they were prior to admission, because of effective procedures, individual knowledge of young women and good cross-agency working.
- Most young women make good progress, especially with their emotional and physical well-being, their educational activity and their growth in their understanding of personal safety.
- External scrutiny from the regulation 44 visitor and guidance from the manager's manager are usually very effective, and offer an appropriate level of support and challenge to the staff team.
- The home is well designed, comfortably furnished and well presented.
- There are a few shortfalls in practice. These include ensuring that important recording is fully completed and accurate, making sure that the children's guide clearly informs young women what to expect from the home, and assessing and using young women's independence skills.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>35: Ensure that within 24 hours of a measure of control, discipline or restraint, an accessible record is made which contains all the information requested on the form.</p> <p>This particularly relates to incidents of restriction of liberty (Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)–(v111)).</p>	8 July 2016
<p>7: Keep the children's guide under review and seek children's comments before revising either document (Regulation 7(2)(c)).</p>	8 July 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and they match the principles detailed in the 'Guide'. This specifically relates to incidents of restriction of liberty ('Guide to the children home's regulations including the quality standards, page 46, paragraph 9.36).
- ensure that there is clarity over whether the main record is kept in either paper or electronic form ('Guide to the children home's regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2).
- ensure that accurate records are kept of all medication administration ('Guide to the children homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15).
- ensure that each child's level of independence skills is assessed, and a systematic programme put in place to develop skills where necessary and to allow existing skills to flourish ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young women. It is owned and managed by a charitable organisation. It is part of a national initiative and is part funded by the Department for Education. The home provides care for young women who are at risk of, or who are subject to, child sexual exploitation, and aims to keep them as near as possible to their own community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12 January 2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young women living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young women benefit from the highly personalised care that is given to them. This is reflected in their good-quality care plans. These clearly set out each young woman’s needs and how these needs will be met. This commitment enables young women to relax and enjoy the experience of being in the house, and being safe and cared for. One young woman said, ‘it’s really lovely here, I feel safe and it’s so comfortable’.</p> <p>Young women all have staff members who they feel they can trust, and they greatly value the nurturing and non-judgemental approach that staff take with them. Generally, relationships between staff and young women are relaxed, and purposeful when necessary. Sometimes, this is not the case and young women challenge staff, both verbally and physically. On these occasions, staff are usually successful in reducing conflict and restoring peace without recourse to external agencies or restrictive practices.</p> <p>Young women make progress in a variety of areas. For example, some young women are now willing to confide distressing life events with staff, and others are now able to identify and report when they are at risk of harm. Some young women are able to take justified pride in the reduction of their use of risky behaviours, while others are still struggling to change. All young women are currently receiving full-time education, and this represents a significant achievement for them. Some young women are also receiving tutor support in the home, as well as a full timetable at school. This assists them in making up lost school time, and they are now able to sit GCSE exams. This expands their possible life chances. Most young women’s physical health improves as they receive appropriate healthcare. For some, changes to address their sexual health give them the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safer.</p> <p>Once in the home, young women’s views are listened to. For example, the young women recently asked that the management team attend the residents meeting on a monthly basis to hear and respond directly to their concerns. This is now in place. Minutes are taken by a young woman, and it is an effective forum. An advocate visits the home weekly, and some young women attend their local authority’s children in care forum. Young women are also clear about how to make complaints, and do so. These are dealt with well. This appropriate attention to young women’s voices helps them to understand that their views are important and raises their self-esteem.</p>	

However, there is room for improvement in this area. The children’s guide is insufficiently explicit about some of the limits to freedom that the young women will initially face. This shortfall restricts young women’s ability to understand fully how risky their pre-admission lifestyle is, and limits their ability to give informed consent to their new placement.

Young women are positive about the quality of activities that the home offers, saying, ‘they are always taking you out somewhere, it’s great.’ Staff take most young women to school and back, and also transport them to support contact with families and close friends. Some family members visit to do activities such as cooking with their children, and the home strongly encourages this. These focused attempts to support contact have resulted in strengthening previously damaged family ties, and for one young person has meant that she now has unlimited, unsupervised contact with a parent.

Because of the nature of the home, most young women who have left the home have gone on to secure units. However, staff try to plan these exits in as positive a way as possible, and always visit the young person in their new placement. This helps the young woman still to feel valued and missed.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young women are helped and protected	Good
<p>A particular feature of this home is that staff can restrict the liberty of movement of a young woman who is at immediate risk of sexual exploitation or other serious harm. This is appropriately detailed within the statement of purpose. The main method used is a deactivation of the young person’s electronic fob. This closes the external doors. Staff have a good understanding of when this measure can be used, and it has been used rarely. For example, it has only be used on one occasion since the last inspection, and three times in the life of the home. Reasons for use on each of these occasions were appropriate, involved just the young woman at risk and lasted the minimum necessary time. However, the home’s own forms were not all fully completed. One was not accessible until some time after the event, and there was no clear evidence of external or management scrutiny. These shortfalls significantly weaken the excellent safeguarding practice in this home.</p> <p>Risk is dealt with well in this home’s practice. Each young person has an individualised, overarching risk plan, and this is reviewed on a daily basis. Staff and management deal competently with high-risk situations routinely. Most incidents are effectively dealt with by using de-escalation skills, and restraint is rarely used. There have only been two incidents since the last inspection. Sanctions for negative behaviour are also used sparingly, with staff preferring a restorative justice approach involving increasing understanding of others’ motivation. Where</p>	

necessary, they will escalate this, for example having focused bullying workshops. Police are rarely called to help to manage behaviour, but strong links have been formed both with local police and at a strategic level. This enables local intelligence to be usefully shared.

The home specialises in working with young women who are involved in sexual exploitation. It makes good use of specialist packages such as the Lottie programme, and staff highly value their regular consultation with the women and girls network (WGN). The young women can also directly access WGN, and one is having regular counselling with them. On admission to the home, young women are not given access to a mobile phone or other Internet-enabled device, although they can use the landline and computers in the house. Over time, young women graduate to a simple phone, and then a smartphone. One of the young women in residence has achieved this. For some young women, this is a huge challenge, but others may find it a relief. For example, one young woman voluntarily gave in her smuggled iPad during this inspection. This practice enables young women to be cut off electronically from their abusing and exploitative networks, and so to be kept safer.

Missing from care patterns are variable, with some huge spikes and some equally significant drops. These clearly link with particular admissions and discharges. However, recent admissions are, so far, doing very well in comparison with pre-placement 'missing' patterns. Young women who have stayed long term have made excellent progress in understanding how to keep themselves safe, and their 'missing' pattern has changed accordingly. The home takes a proactive approach if and when young people go missing, following them and immediately alerting the police. The rate of local authority 'missing from care' return home interviews has greatly improved, although there is still room for improvement. The home is appropriately persistent in trying to make sure that these happen and is also confirming their expectation for these at admission.

Currently, most young women in the home are following Ramadan fasting and routines. This has been challenging for staff to manage, for example providing a pre-dawn meal and then trying to get young women up for a fasting day at school. Young women felt that they were too tired to go to school. However, staff were determined to support young women in this endeavour, so have now developed an effective routine with them involving the early meal, non-negotiable school attendance and breaking the fast at the mosque after dusk. This demonstrates the firm but fair, young women-centred approach which characterises this home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager holds an appropriate qualification, and has been in post	

since this project started. She is highly experienced in residential care, and offers visible and credible leadership to this innovative project. She is well-supported by her line manager and the regulation 44 visitor. Together, they offer a high level of scrutiny, support and challenge that is usually highly effective.

The manager has effective working relationships with other agencies, but regularly challenges them to seek better arrangements for young people. For example, she has advocated with education establishments who have been reluctant at times to admit young women from the home because of safeguarding concerns. The manager and staff have been persistent in eventually securing education placements for all young women who have lived in the house.

Over time, the manager has developed an excellent understanding of what works best for these young women, and usually her appropriate monitoring systems help to support this. There has been much learning from the early days of this project, for example, which young women would benefit most from it. The manager is now in a position to put this into place, and recent admissions have been more structured and given young people a short 'taster' before moving in. The statement of purpose has been routinely updated to reflect these practice changes.

Staff are very positive about the range of supervision and training on offer to them. They describe it as 'awesome', particularly praising the social pedagogy training and the clinical supervision. They feel 'well-supported' by each other and by their management. This is vital for the success of such a high-intensity project. Staffing levels are now good, but until recently this was not the case and has had an adverse impact on administrative routines. As a staff member said, 'the turnover of staff disrupted the rhythm of processes and routines.' This is demonstrated in some disparity and confusion between paper and electronic records, and in medication administration records.

The manager knows her home well, and has a strong understanding of its strengths and limitations. These are well reflected in her development plan and workforce planning document. The requirement from the last inspection has been thoroughly met, and progress has been made on all the recommendations.

The home and garden present as an attractive, comfortable and safe environment for these young women to live in.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young women are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young women who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young women and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young women.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young women being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young women living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young women. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young women and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young women. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young women 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 women who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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