

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15 June 2016
Unique reference number	1159682
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	Post vacant
Inspector	Bridget Goddard

Inspection date	15 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

1159682

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young women are not kept safe in this home.
- They frequently go missing and when they are missing, they engage in high-risk activities.
- The number of times that young women are going missing is increasing, and consequently so is their level of risk.
- Managers' monitoring of missing from care patterns is poor.
- Staffing deployment is concerning in that young people usually go missing in the evening or at night-time. This is when the fewest number of staff are on duty.
- Efforts to prevent young women from going missing by, for example, temporarily restricting their liberty, are ineffective.
- The home has not taken effective action to reduce concerns about young women's welfare by, for example, taking action in relation to their use of mobile phones.
- The home currently does not have a registered manager. The previous manager recently resigned and is the second registered manager to do so in the short time that this home has been open.
- Daily care routines are ineffectively planned. This means that young people do not routinely attend educational provision, do not access activities systematically and are often asleep in the daytime.
- The home does not have effective professional relationships with key partners, such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The children's home's strengths

- Young women confide details of their high-risk activity to staff, which enables them to pass on important intelligence and seek appropriate resources for young women, such as healthcare and health advice.
- One-to-one sessions are targeted well and happen regularly.
- Staff are very committed to raising young women's self-esteem, and use a positive comments book routinely.
- Staff aim to empower young women to make good choices, and have involved them in a recruitment interview for staff and arranged a drug and alcohol workshop for them.
- The independent visitor offers effective scrutiny to the home.
- Senior managers have acted promptly to make appropriate interim arrangements to cover the registered manager vacancy, and have fast-tracked the new manager recruitment arrangements.

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

Requirement	Due date
12: Ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. This relates to staff receiving appropriate safeguarding training and support. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i))	1 August 2016
12: Ensure that staff take effective action whenever there is serious concern about a child's welfare. This particularly relates to children's use of mobile phones. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(vi))	1 August 2016
12: Ensure 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. This particularly relates to the use of temporary restriction of liberty measures. (Regulation 12 (2)(b))	1 August 2016
12: Ensure that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (2)(e))	1 August 2016
28: Ensure that the new manager of the home has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. This particularly relates to experience in safeguarding children at risk of abuse or exploitation. (Regulation 28 (1)(b)(i))	1 August 2016
13: Ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide safe care for each child. This particularly relates to night staffing numbers. (Regulation 13 (2)(d))	1 August 2016
45: Ensure that an effective system is developed to monitor, review and evaluate missing from care patterns for young people, which determines the actions necessary to improve the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(c))	1 August 2016
14: Ensure that children receive effectively planned care. This particularly relates to consistently executed boundaries around attendance at education, night-time routines and systematically	1 August 2016

planned activities. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	
5: Seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate, having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. This particularly relates to relationships with the local multi-agency sexual exploitation panel. (Regulation 5 (d))	1 August 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that a request is always made to the responsible authority to carry out the independent return home interview when a child returns to the home after being missing or away from the home without permission. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that children's bedrooms are routinely cleaned, and that there is an effective balance achieved between personal space and hygiene. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- Ensure that there is compliance with the organisation's policy on the expected monthly frequency of fire evacuations. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that children can see the results of their views being expressed. This particularly relates to repeated requests for pets made in the young people's meetings. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five 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 communities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12 January 2016	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Inadequate</p>
<p>Young people’s lives in the home lack both structure and focus. Neither of the young people currently living at the home are being helped effectively to make choices which would keep them safe. Staff, together with the young women, produce a weekly planner involving both activities and education, but these are rarely followed. When young people do engage in, for example, cooking or gardening with staff, they are proud of their achievements. But these initiatives are not consistently sustained. Staff do have some positive influence on young people, who generally relate warmly to them. This reflects staff members’ skill at taking a non-judgemental and accepting approach, and is reflected in positive key work sessions. However, staff are not effective at using their influence to dissuade young women from risky behaviours routinely, and to encourage positive actions, such as attending education.</p> <p>Young women have made some progress, notably in some aspects of healthcare. For example, one young woman is now regularly attending child and adolescent mental health services appointments, and the other now attends physical health appointments more regularly. However, one young woman is now pregnant, and there have been concerns about the emotional wellbeing of both young people recently.</p> <p>Educational progress has deteriorated. Young women have been attending education less and less, and their engagement is now poor. For example, in April, one young woman attended 84% of the time and her engagement was mainly good, while in May she attended 40% of the time and her engagement was mainly poor. This pattern has continued.</p> <p>Young women are appropriately supported to express their views and wishes on life in the home, and staff seek to raise their self-esteem, for example, by the use of positive comment books. However, occasionally feedback on their requests, such as to have pets, is not timely. An independent advocate visits the home weekly, and has sound relationships with young women. They are keen to express their views on day-to-day life in the home, and one young woman has also been involved in staff recruitment. There is an appropriate feedback system between the young women, the advocate and home managers. For example, the advocate made it clear to managers recently how much the young women were adversely affected by the registered manager changes.</p> <p>Because of the high-risk behaviour presented by young women in the home,</p>	

transitions to other placements have been sudden, and in response to extreme crises. Staff have stayed in touch with both young people affected by this, and one in particular, who is now doing well, has advised staff that they should have been 'stricter' over the use of mobile phones and encouragement to attend education.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
<p>Young women are not kept safe in this home and are currently unable to make safe choices. This home specialises in working with young women whose lifestyles have involved their exposure to exploitation, in particular, child sexual exploitation. The home can use methods, such as short-term restriction of liberty, when young women are at immediate risk of harm; this includes using the electronic door system to lock doors. However, the home is unable to protect them using this approach because young women effectively override the system. As a young woman said, 'I've been going missing more. I don't want to go missing in the day so go at night. Sometimes they try and stop us. We set the fire alarm off and they can't.'</p> <p>In addition, although the home has amended its practice so that new residents will have to earn access to mobile phones, the current residents still have their phones. This means that young women are regularly in touch with males who encourage them to leave the home after dark, get into cars and become involved in highly risky encounters, usually involving sexual activity and substance or alcohol misuse. The home is actively considering ways of persuading young women to give up their mobile phones, but the speed at which they are doing this is slow.</p> <p>Currently, young women are going missing on most nights. This represents a considerable increase for both young women since earlier this year. Professional colleagues are extremely concerned about this trend and make comments such as, 'She is less safe now and much more at risk,' and, 'We knew her exploitation group before she was in the home, but now she has discovered a different and more worrying type of exploitation.' Professional colleagues are also frustrated that staff seem, 'helpless to intervene effectively'. However, staff do alert social workers appropriately when worrying incidents or patterns happen, and follow processes for referrals to the designated officer. Local authorities involved have a poor record in following up missing from care incidents with return interviews. Recently, the home has begun to challenge this, but it is too early yet to have had much impact.</p> <p>Staff are ineffective at enabling young women to establish a regular routine. Staff</p>	

generally have close relationships with young women, who are willing to confide their worries and concerns. This does help to build up local intelligence about abusive and exploitative patterns, and can enable young women to be encouraged to get appropriate healthcare. However, staff are not able to use their relationships for example, to encourage young people to attend on-site education. Young women themselves say, 'Haven't had much education since Feb when college stopped. Odd bits with tutor but mainly slept all day.'

The physical environment in the home is generally comfortable, welcoming and appropriately equipped. However, the condition of some young women's bedrooms is unhygienic and this requires attention. Fire checks are usually completed in line with the organisation's policies, but fire evacuation frequency, although regular enough, is not completed in a timely manner.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
<p>This home does not currently have a registered manager in post. The home was registered in September 2015, and the original manager resigned in December 2015. The home was then managed by an interim manager, until a second manager was registered in April 2016. This manager has now left, and the home is again being managed by an interim manager. This is the same interim manager as previously, and she is a competent and effective senior manager within the wider organisation. Together with the operational manager, they have made appropriate arrangements promptly, both to guide the home through this change, and to recruit a new manager. However, the impact of managerial changes on staff has been considerable. The lack of a consistent management team has meant that staff have had to adjust to different management styles and priorities repeatedly. This has impaired the development of a consistent team ethos.</p> <p>It is concerning that two registered managers have now left the service after a relatively short time, and both have cited dissatisfaction with the organisation and specifically expressed concerns about safeguarding. These safeguarding concerns are strongly echoed by key professionals who work closely with the home. The effect of this is that these colleagues have lost confidence in the home's ability to care effectively for young women, and their trust and respect for the service are significantly impaired. For example, an external colleague commented, 'They have just not been able to put into place the measures needed.'</p> <p>Leaders and managers are supported well by the scrutiny of the independent visitor who completes the monthly regulation 44 visits. The visitor has recently</p>	

expressed increasing concerns about young women's safety and educational progress. This has supplemented the concerns expressed by external agencies. As such, managers have been very aware that young women are going missing more frequently, that methods to prevent this are ineffective, and also that educational attendance and achievement are poor. They have made some changes to the statement of purpose to reflect this, and have had discussions both within and outside the home to put improvement measures in place. However, their efforts lack the necessary pace, and an appropriate understanding of events and trends. For example, managers do not have effective oversight of the systems which detail who goes missing, to where and at what time. This limits their ability to intervene effectively.

Staff have appropriate supervision routinely, and also benefit from regular professional consultation from the women and girls network, which focuses on understanding young women's particular behaviours. Staff have a level of training in safeguarding and the impact of child sexual exploitation, and most are trained in social pedagogy. However, local professional partners note differing levels of expertise among staff in relation to safeguarding knowledge and experience. They are keen that all staff access specific training provided through local networks who specialise in child sexual exploitation awareness. As this home is specifically tailored to meet the needs of young women at high risk of exploitation, training priorities should fully reflect this.

Although there is a recently drafted development plan in place, it does not currently address whether staff in the home are appropriately deployed. For example, most missing incidents take place when there are the lowest numbers of staff on duty and when managers are rarely present.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people 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 people 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 people 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 children looked after 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 people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people 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 people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people 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 people 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 the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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