

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	30/08/2016
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	Ron Giddens
Registered manager	Awaiting registration
Inspector	Bridget Goddard

Inspection date	30/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1159682

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- A new manager is in place with good knowledge and experience of safeguarding and the risk of sexual exploitation.
- Staff are now receiving good support in safeguarding, and are better at assessing if young people are at risk of harm.
- Staff have taken effective action in relation to internet-enabled mobile phones, and this helps to keep young people safe.
- Temporary restriction of liberty measures now work appropriately, which gives staff further options in emergency situations.
- Effective systems are now in use to monitor and review young people's safeguarding patterns.
- Staff deployment and knowledge is now more effective in preventing young people from leaving the home without permission.
- Daily life in the home is now well structured, with personalised arrangements for getting up, meals and bedtimes.
- Each young person has well-planned access to appropriate indoor and outside activities.
- Young people feel more confident in the home's ability to keep them safe.
- Staff feel more confident in their ability to keep young people safe.
- Staff continue to have warm and accepting relationships with young people.
- A sexual health worker, an advocate and a therapist all now visit the home regularly, which helps to meet young people's needs.
- The home has demonstrated its commitment to improving young people's education chances by arranging weekly tuition during the school holidays.
- The manager has audited the recording systems and removed duplicate processes, which gives staff more time for direct work with young people.
- Work on behavioural consequences, such as sanctions, has only just started and is not yet routine.
- Routine processes such as reports to social workers do not always happen within agreed timescales.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>Ensure that staff encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding. (Regulation 11(2)(a)(iii))</p>	20/10/2016
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>Ensure that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home.</p> <p>This particularly relates to the consistent application of standard procedures. (Regulation 14(1)(a))</p>	20/10/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the use of agency staff is carefully monitored and reviewed to ensure that children receive consistent continuity of care. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- Ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home’s records as ‘living documents’ supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 58, paragraph 11.19)

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
12/01/2016	Full	Requires improvement
15/06/2016	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Staff have maintained their warm and accepting relationships with young people, and this is within a new, more ordered, home environment. For example, each young person has a personalized daily routine with getting up, meal and bedtime routines, as well as well-planned summer holiday activities. These are wide ranging and include home-based activities such as music, baking and animal care, as well as special trips to a festival and to the cinema. Some young people have their special interests well catered for by attending 'open mike' poetry sessions with staff. Other young people are keeping up their schoolwork through the holidays by attending on-site education which has been organised by the home. The home now has a sense of quiet purpose, and an active buzz has replaced the previously flat atmosphere.</p> <p>Young people understand that staff cannot allow them to do everything that they want to do and, although they do not always like it, they appreciate that staff are trying to keep them safe. They are clear about their rights, and are knowledgeable and willing to use either the complaints system or to discuss matters with their advocate, who is a regular visitor to the home. Young people are very involved in everyday life in the home, choosing food, activities and decor, and have been involved in staff recruitment. They have also been central to the revision of the children's guide and have helpfully clarified the details, particularly around limitations on internet use via mobile phones. There is room for more involvement for young people in contributing to their own written records.</p> <p>Young people are making progress across a range of measures. Some young people have developed musical and creative skills, and shown the ability to look after a dependent pet reliably. Others are engaging well with staff in activities and maintaining positive family contact. All still demonstrate risky behaviour at times, but overall the frequency and/or level has lessened over time. Young people are making good choices about their sexual health, and in varying degrees are beginning to understand the complexities around their negative behaviour patterns.</p> <p>Staff have arranged for the sexual health nurse to visit the home routinely. This enables young people to develop a better understanding of physical risks and remedies. In addition, the home has now appointed an appropriately qualified therapist who visits the home weekly. She is engaging directly with young people on these visits, and this gives them another helpful option to share their feelings and begin to understand their motivations. In parallel with this, the staff group</p>	

receives regular consultancy from a specialist organisation which supplements their training and enables them to see past presenting behaviours. This level of understanding assists staff in fully appreciating and celebrating each young person's achievements, for example a young person not accepting an invitation to go out at night.

Admissions to the home are carefully managed. Most requests for admission are refused. Those that are provisionally accepted are subject to a matching assessment and planned visits. All staff are prepared for a new young person, and the impact on existing young people is sensitively considered. New young people think that the staff are 'welcoming'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>At the last inspection, this home was judged as overall inadequate, and this judgement predominantly reflected serious safeguarding concerns. The home has made very good progress in ensuring that young people are now safer than they were.</p> <p>Staff are more attuned to assessing whether young people are at risk of harm. Risk assessments are thoroughly undertaken and are regularly updated. Staff are proactive if they sense that young people might be planning to go missing, and now deploy themselves effectively. If young people do go missing, they follow them relentlessly. Young people say, 'It's taken them a long time to help to keep us safe, but now they do, they try their hardest. They've changed the fire alarm to five minutes and they follow us for ages.' This is in stark contrast to young people's comments at the previous inspection, when it was clear that they did not feel that they were kept safe.</p> <p>Managers have backed up this change of approach by amending their statement of purpose to clarify that new young people will have to earn access to internet-enabled phones. They have persuaded existing young people to relinquish their smartphones, and very recently amended settings on the door systems so that young people at immediate risk of harm can be more effectively protected. Safeguarding incidents for each young person are now closely monitored and discussed at weekly team meetings. These measures have resulted in young people feeling safer, staff feeling more confident, and an overall reduction in the frequency and level of missing incidents, over time. However, this improvement in 'missing' incidents is fragile and, although the different approach by staff has made a significant positive difference, the admissions and discharges of particular young people are also a relevant factor.</p> <p>Staff have also recently begun to exercise behavioural boundaries more often. For</p>	

example, they have carried out room searches when appropriate and begun to use sanctions as consequences for certain actions. Most recently, the manager has decided on a clear pathway leading up to and after a member of staff has been assaulted. While these initiatives are appropriate, the whole staff group is not yet completely familiar with this approach. Overall, the team has done very well by implementing major necessary change in a short timescale, but it is still early days.

Environmental risks are well managed, for example, with regular fire evacuation drills. Staff recruitment is safely handled, and appropriate initial checks and observations are undertaken on agency staff. Allegations are promptly and sensitively handled, and there are effective links with the designated officer. Young people have confidence in how staff handle allegations: 'Its good you can talk to staff about things like that, which you are not happy about, and they take it on board.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The new manager of the home was appointed just after the last full inspection. She is a qualified social worker with direct experience of working in a sister home and, as such, is both knowledgeable and experienced in working with young people who have experienced sexual exploitation. She has recently applied to be registered as the home's manager.</p> <p>Together with the operational managers, she has addressed effectively both the requirements from the previous judgement of inadequate and the recommendations. She has offered the team relevant training and support, and raised morale and confidence. The manager has been proactive in positively changing practice in relation to mobile phones, and has championed the home offering effectively planned daily care. She has revised some recording practice and removed duplicate processes. Staff say, 'We are getting there. Things are much better.' Monitoring systems are much improved, for example manager comments are visible on all key documents and safeguarding summaries are regularly reviewed. Where this scrutiny has identified shortfalls, clear processes have been introduced, for example consequences for negative behaviour. The manager's new monitoring systems clearly identify trends in young people's progress. The manager is vigilant in noting these, for example the timing of cannabis use, and she then prepares with staff a comprehensive plan to respond effectively to the particular pattern.</p> <p>The manager is maintaining attendance at key professional networks and actively seeking to work positively with other agencies, for example the police and local authority colleagues. While external colleagues say that they can see 'improvements recently', there is still some way to go before trust and confidence</p>	

in this home are fully restored. For example, local authority colleagues are rightly concerned about 'inconsistencies', for example in the provision of timely reports and the imposition of some behavioural boundaries.

Staff are well and regularly supervised. They receive good-quality individual supervision, supplemented by regular weekly team meetings that enable group learning. Night workers also now have their own meeting, which keeps them fully on board with changes to practice at the home. Regular agency workers, although well inducted, do not receive any supervision. This prevents them having opportunities to reflect on their practice. The manager has reviewed all staff training and ensured that those who had gaps in core training, such as 'Calm' training, have now attended relevant training.

The statement of purpose has recently been revised, and accurately reflects the aims and objectives of the home. The home itself is comfortable and well equipped. Young people describe it as 'homely'. The manager takes necessary action when significant events happen in the home and promptly notifies the relevant authorities.

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 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 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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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