

1159682

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a national charity. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for six children

The current manager was registered with Ofsted on 11 January 2018

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2017	Full	Good
09/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/08/2016	Full	Good
15/06/2016	Full	Inadequate

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</p> <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose and treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(i) and (ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the incident in which staff left a child to spend the night in a damaged room.</p>	06/08/2018
<p>The protection of children standard</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 requires the registered person to ensure that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action when there is serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(v)(vi))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the incident in which a number of staff did not ensure the safety of a child in a damaged room.</p>	06/08/2018

Recommendations

- Staff should enable all children to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their daily care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6) In particular, this relates to children being aware of and introduced to new staff.
- Ensure that there is a system in place, so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13) This particularly relates

to notifying Ofsted.

- Staff must keep all children's case records up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3) This particularly relates to the updating of placement plans and risk assessments.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Generally, children receive a good standard of individualised care and most children make good progress. However, several staff members were involved in a recent incident when a child's well-being was not promoted, and the child was not treated with dignity and respect.

Most, but not all children, enjoy strong relationships with staff and demonstrate clear signs of trust and belonging. Two social workers confirmed this, making positive comments on how well staff both understand and meet their child's needs.

A particular strength of this home is that there is education available on site. The teacher has strong links with home staff and managers and is well placed to advocate effectively for children with, for example, virtual headteachers. Most children have not routinely attended education for some time, and this close working arrangement between home and school helps regularise their attendance.

Children's core health needs are well met. In particular, the home works well with other professionals to ensure that children's emotional health needs are supported effectively.

Children are confident in making their views known to staff and are influential in contributing to the decorating of their own room, weekly menus and activities. Despite this, children feel that they would now like to be more involved in more aspects of daily life in the home, such as knowing in advance who is going to care for them and being introduced to any new agency staff.

Considerable thought is given to planning new admissions to the home, with particular attention being paid to matching new children with existing children. Staff arrange planned introductory visits, which include introductions to existing children to smooth the transition for all. Understanding of which children staff work best with is still developing, but the admissions that are planned for the future appropriately reflect the learning so far.

With the exception of the recent example of poor practice, children generally have a positive experience in this home. They enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and benefit strongly from personalised daily routines.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Safeguarding practice is dominated by a recent incident when staff allowed a child to spend the night in a room with broken windows. This incident did not only reflect poor practice, but also left the child at some risk from a small quantity of glass debris. Fortunately, the child did not come to any harm.

The registered manager was told of the event the next morning and immediately secured the room and ensured that the child was safely moved. There has subsequently been a thorough management investigation, which will lead to formal proceedings, and there is an excellent action plan in place covering both safeguarding and rebuilding an effective staff team. All appropriate external colleagues have been notified, but there was a delay in notifying Ofsted of the incident.

This isolated incident does not accurately reflect the home's usually careful approach to keeping children safe. It starts with robust staff recruitment practice with appropriate checks and validation in place. This is then well supported by appropriate induction training, and then further locally sourced safeguarding training.

Relationships with local safeguarding colleagues are strong, and they have visited the home. The home's missing from care procedures are followed thoroughly, and chronologies on individual events are appropriately detailed. Staff are tenacious in keeping in touch by following, or by telephone with, children who have gone missing from the home.

The children who have been longest in the home demonstrate a risk reduction in their missing behaviours, for example they are missing less often or for shorter times. Children were pleased that when they return to the home following a missing episode, staff 'always treat you the same'. This helps to promote a sense of belonging in the children involved.

Social workers were positive about the home's overall ability to safeguard their particular child. Risk assessments and individual safety plans are detailed and thorough. They are not always updated promptly in line with the home's own expectations but do accurately reflect children's individual risks and the protections in place.

Restrictive measures of behaviour management are not used in this home, and staff generally rely on their relationships and sound knowledge of children's attachment styles to create a positive environment. This is usually successful, particularly when staff have known children long enough to jointly develop with them effective strategies to manage their painful emotions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home is led efficiently by an effective registered manager, who is well supported by her helpful deputy manager. Children, staff and external colleagues alike are quick to make unprompted, positive comments about the registered manager. For example, a social worker commented, 'I have the utmost confidence in [the registered manager] to manage situations as they arise and appreciate her communication at all times.'

This confidence is borne out by the registered manager's prompt response to the recent incident, and her comprehensive follow-up plan which covers effectively the immediate and

longer-term implications. For example, an external service has been commissioned to offer weekly sessions to restore trust and appropriate team relationships. At the same time, additional supervisions and safeguarding input have been put into place.

Supervision frequency is appropriate to need, and all staff, including new members, have had an appraisal to determine their development needs. The registered manager has carried out a thorough training audit, and this has led to a focused strategy for those who have not yet completed the required level 3 qualification.

The management team has a very good knowledge of each child's needs and aspirations and is confident in challenging the local authority as appropriate. Monitoring systems are developing well, and the registered manager has an overview of all paper-based activity and usefully debriefs both staff and children after incidents. Children appreciate this, saying, 'She's really caring and annoying, like a parent and manager in one.'

Social workers are very positive about communications from staff in the home, seeing them as timely and informative. Sometimes key documents, such as placement plans, are not updated as regularly as the home's own procedures state. However, they are still useful and thorough documents that represent the child well.

The statement of purpose is regularly updated and generally reflects the type of care offered by the home. The physical environment of the home is well kept, safe and comfortable.

Usually, notifications are timely and appropriate. However, there was a delay in sending one to Ofsted relating to a recent incident. This delay was due to managers seeking further clarity about the incident, and it did not have a negative effect on the investigation.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1159682

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Registered provider address: 1 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Romy Smith

Inspector

Bridget Goddard, social care inspector

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