

SC459857

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a children's charity. It caters for up to six young people who have emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties. It has two emergency beds, one of which is used to provide up to 140 nights per year of Staying Close accommodation. This is in conjunction with the Department for Education's Staying Close Innovation initiative. The registered manager has been in post since 2016.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 August 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
25/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/10/2016	Full	Good
18/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- Ensure that children are supported to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- Ensure that the home is regularly maintained to provide a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A strength of this home is that the management group, in particular, accepts young people for who they are, and encourages its staff to do the same. This means that young people can grow and flourish at their own pace, and they will always be supported in that. This approach has enabled some young people who have lived in the home for a long time to make exceptional progress in some areas. For example, some young people are now much better able to regulate their emotions and deal with their anger by discussion rather than destruction. Young people are also more able to function within boundaries, and for one young person these new-found skills have resulted in a very successful work placement at the Department for Education. This excellent opportunity was arranged by the organisation, and has inspired the young person to take further examinations and given her a goal to work towards.

The home prioritises supporting young people's educational needs by tenaciously seeking full-time places and maintaining good links with education providers. It strongly encourages regular attendance, but is not always successful in this. Staff support and celebrate achievement, for example by obtaining a tutor to give a young person additional support.

All young people have some staff whom they trust and, equally, there are some whom they are less comfortable with. Some newer staff, in particular, are not fully accepted yet, but managers are aware of this and are working to resolve it by modelling expectations. Young people are confident that their favourite staff want to spend time with them, but they are not so sure about some other staff.

There is an imaginative plan of possible summer holiday activities for young people, plus each one has a holiday planned. Young people also value the individual time that they have with some staff, just talking, baking or playing games. They are less positive about the food that is on offer, and some feel strongly that it is not prepared with care.

Young people's views are usually listened to with respect and consideration. However, there is no robust mechanism for consulting and then feeding back to young people on such areas as aspects of holiday plans, behaviour management strategies and some health and safety matters.

An area of excellent practice is the home's preparation of young people for their adult futures. Young people participate in a highly individualised process that is well supported by the wider organisation. In addition, the home is playing a small part in the wider organisation's Staying Close project, and this potentially extends opportunities for some young people reaching adulthood.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people have detailed, individualised risk assessments that are regularly updated. Known risks are thoughtfully and safely managed in partnership with appropriate other agencies. Staff recognise that adolescents need some risk in their lives, and they try to encourage safe risk-taking by offering exciting opportunities such as speedboat rides and holidays abroad.

Young people who have been in the home longest have a good knowledge of the risks involved in substance misuse and sexual activity, and are aware of how to keep themselves safe. These young people are not going missing from the home as frequently as they did earlier, and do not go missing for lengthy periods of time. However, other young people, who have recently moved to the home, have had a considerable number of worrying 'missing' episodes.

The processes to follow when a young person goes missing are well understood by staff. All of the young people have a personalised 'missing' protocol, depending on their risk levels. Staff try hard to keep in touch with young people who miss their curfew and, if necessary, will appropriately involve other agencies.

Allegations of possible harm to young people are promptly and effectively dealt with, in partnership with the appropriate agencies. The consequences are well considered, fair to all and have young people's safety as their main consideration.

Restraints and sanctions are rarely used in this home, and there is an emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour. This is reinforced by an individual reward system based on desired behaviours. Generally, the atmosphere in this home is a pleasant and positive one, and staff focus on de-escalation and distraction if any possible conflict emerges.

Young people are well protected from environmental harm by regular health and safety checks and appropriate risk assessments. Recruitment practice is sound and geared to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a highly motivated and stable group of managers in place who share a common vision of wanting the best for the young people in their care. This leads to the home offering a high standard of individualised care to young people. There is a very effective, appropriately qualified registered manager in place.

The management team knows the young people well, and has a clear understanding of when things are progressing well and when it needs additional help. Managers are happy and comfortable to advocate to the local authority on young people's behalf. They frequently act as the broker between the two, and are currently in the delicate process of positively influencing semi-independent placements.

Staff feel well supported by their managers, and new staff, particularly, value their comprehensive training and induction programme. Appraisals are routinely undertaken, and are appropriately focused on staff development and are challenging. Training is effectively delivered, particularly in house, and reflects the social pedagogy approach of the organisation.

The management team is very open to scrutiny and comment, and it values the robust independent visitor reports, which are both clear and comply with regulations. The registered manager's own monitoring is thorough and regular, and file audits are routine and effective. The registered manager and her line manager usually take decisive action over any issue that compromises the standard of care offered to young people.

The physical environment of the home looks and feels like a family home, with pictures, ornaments and cushions around. However, the decoration is very tired in places, and there are areas that are grubby and look uncared for.

Case records are lengthy and detailed yet give a full picture of the young person, and they are generally up to date. Local authority colleagues are positive about the way that the home communicates with them. The statement of purpose is regularly reviewed and gives an accurate representation of the objectives of the home.

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 difference 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: SC459857

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: St Christopher's Fellowship, 1 Putney High Street,
London, Wandsworth SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Jennifer Hiskey

Inspector

Bridget Goddard, social care inspector

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