

1159755

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides periods of residential care for up to four girls, aged between 12 and 17, who are at risk in their communities. This may, for example, be due to the risk of child sexual exploitation, gang affiliation, trafficking or a combination of these risk factors.

The home's approach to working with young people is based on social pedagogy, with an emphasis on the importance of attachment informed relationships.

The manager was registered in November 2017.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 November 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 8 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
11/07/2017	Full	Good
16/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/06/2016	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must make sure that all staff are familiar with the policy for the protection of children from abuse. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.21)

In particular, ensure that all staff know the external agencies where they can take child protection concerns.

- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that staff are reminded continually of the emotional support available to them.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people with complex or challenging needs make exceptional progress from their traumatic starting points. They are thriving educationally, emotionally and socially. Young people commended the caring attitude of staff and highlighted how living in the home has significantly improved their lives.

The home provides young people with stability, through a strong emphasis on trust and creating a sense of belonging. Comprehensive care planning is informed by research and psychological theories. Professional feedback regarding the care was very positive. One social worker described the care as 'outstanding'.

All of the young people are positively engaged in some form of education or employment. The care they receive helps to restore their confidence and they benefit from an exceptional level of personal growth. All of the young people have increased their maturity, resilience and sense of self-worth. This enables them to be aspirational for their futures.

Staff work persistently and creatively to provide educational and learning opportunities for the young people. Young people engage in the home's book club. They practice interview skills and write their curriculum vitae and complete online courses. Additionally, young people explore their business ideas, including video blogging.

Young people's achievements include completing their GCSEs, obtaining vocational qualifications, securing apprenticeships and attending their school prom. These are significant achievements considering that some of the young people have spent long periods of time out of education.

Young people make a positive contribution to society, through volunteering, participating in citizenship programmes and completing meaningful work placements. Young people learn to appreciate other cultures and they celebrate a range of religious and secular events such as Eid, Halloween and Black History Month.

House meetings provide another opportunity for learning. Topics covered include knowing your legal rights and benefits advice. Staff creatively offer personalised support to young people who have left the home through the 'staying close' initiative. A good example of this was purchasing a Moses basket for a pregnant young person.

Young people are actively encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle through exercise and diet. They have participated in a fitness bootcamp, swimming, hot yoga, pampering sessions and a vegetarian week. They also benefit from highly effective support through counselling and regular key-work sessions.

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

Young people feel safe living in this home and they benefit from good safeguarding arrangements. Currently, no young people are going missing from the home. This is an excellent achievement, considering the young people's personal histories.

Staff look beyond the young people's presenting behaviours to address their underlying issues. Research-informed practice underpinned by appropriate training enables staff to respond positively to each young person's trauma and helps them to de-escalate potential incidents. Sanctions are appropriate and when appropriately applied teach the young people the importance of reparation.

Since living in the home, the young people's behaviour and their emotional well-being have significantly improved. Young people take pride in their ability to manage their emotions and not act on negative thoughts. Young people appreciate the help they receive to control distressing feelings.

Staff provide sessions on assertiveness and mental health awareness. Young people are learning to make positive changes for the future such as ending an unsuitable relationship. Young people receive help to gain insight. They are learning to apologise for their behaviour when this is inappropriate and their comfort boxes practically help them to calm down when they feel anxious.

Young people are supported and encouraged by staff to work through a specialist child sexual exploitation survivor programme. This includes topics such as boundaries, phone safety, healthy relationships, power and control. Young people receive an extensive education in keeping themselves safe, including online safety. Young people also may feel safe enough to disclose past issues of abuse to staff, which helps with their personal growth and understanding of their earlier life experiences.

Staff benefit from a wide range of safeguarding training and guidance. However, it

became apparent during the inspection that several members of staff were unaware of all the external agencies they could report child protection concerns to. This information is clearly detailed in policies and is also part of the induction process.

Young people recognise their triggers that may lead them to go missing and have been taught strategies to address this such as by staying in. The excellent links with the police in the child sexual exploitation, missing and community teams ensures that the young people are safeguarded effectively. Leaders and managers also share, discuss and adopt good practice by their contribution to the local child vulnerability panel.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Young people benefit from a consistently high-quality service. One that helps them to understand and learn from past events, to understand their vulnerabilities and how to overcome these to keep themselves safe. Parents, local authority staff and the police praised the quality of care. A parent stated that 'staff are child-centred, nurturing and always go the extra mile'.

The dynamic registered manager is supported by an exceptionally strong deputy manager and a committed team leader. Leaders and managers lead by example and they have enthusiastically implemented the principles of social pedagogy. They demonstrate consistently high expectations for the young people and the staff, which are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes.

The demonstrably and appropriately warm, high-quality interactions between the young people and staff are commendable. This enables the young people to form trusting and mutually respectful relationships with staff.

Excellent partnerships with national and global businesses provide young people with significant opportunities to undertake work experience with leading retailers and influential agencies. Young people have also enjoyed and benefited from donations that have created opportunities for new experiences, such as an aviation day with an international airline.

Leaders and managers share good practice nationally and within the organisation. The home was featured in the recently published all-party parliamentary group inquiry on out of area placements. A former resident has positively shared her experience with a national newspaper and the home has also influenced research through its work with Middlesex University.

An ongoing issue in the home is staff retention, which the organisation is creatively tackling through various initiatives. There is recognition that this work is particularly emotionally challenging to staff and a wide range of support is available for them. Although staff feedback was generally positive, some staff members did not feel valued by the organisation.

Leaders and managers have addressed the recommendations from the previous

inspection and the monitoring visit effectively. Leaders and managers are aware of the home's strengths and areas for development and there is a clear vision for the future. The quality assurance system is focused on continually enhancing young people's lives and the home's actions to achieve this.

Young people live in a very well-maintained, spacious and homely house, which has a range of communal areas, including a chill out room. Inspirational motivational quotes are on display throughout the home. Young people also benefit from a large back garden, which they help to maintain through planting flowers.

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: 1159755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

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

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Laverne Cole

Inspector

Sharon Payne: social care inspector

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