

# 1159755

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children. The home's statement of purpose specifies that it will look after females aged between 12 and 17 who are at risk of sexual exploitation, gang affiliation, trafficking or a combination of these factors.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2021, and has worked at the home since its opening in 2015.

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children and several staff and a telephone discussion with a parent. Email and telephone contact took place with placing authority social workers and other professionals, including a therapist and police officer attached to the home.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 2 March 2021, to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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:** 26 November 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
26/11/2019	Full	Outstanding
08/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
11/07/2017	Full	Good
16/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children make exceptional progress in a fun-filled home, where laughter and humour are commonplace. Children and staff are motivated by a culture of empowerment and collaborative working. The home is guided by motivational phrases such as 'I can' not 'I can't' and 'do with' and not 'do to'.

Children form very strong attachments with staff and benefit from a specialist intervention which is highly effective. Children continue to remain in contact with staff after they move on from the home, and for many children the home is considered their 'base'. Staff continue to provide support to children under the home's 'staying close' programme of ongoing support.

Children are rightly proud of their achievements and value the help and support offered to them by staff. One child recently spoke to a group of government officials about her pride at learning how to manage her own behaviour and achieve stability for the first time in her life. This was an outstanding achievement for the child concerned.

Extremely positive outcomes for children are evidence of the strong progress they have made. Since the last inspection, each child has enjoyed a planned move on from the home. There is evidence of this in the highly positive feedback from parents and social workers. One parent commented, 'I can't praise the home enough for what they have done.' And a placing social worker stated that she was 'amazed' by the improvement in her allocated child's behaviour.

Staff have worked very hard to minimise the impact of COVID-19, and they have used the lockdown period as a means of developing relationships in the home. Children enjoyed a huge range of activities, such as baking and pampering sessions with staff. The recent reduction in restrictions has allowed staff to further broaden the range of activities, which included a first trip to a concert and a camping trip for one child.

Educational achievement is highly valued by both children and staff. Children benefit from a specialist education and life skills worker who matches children's abilities to an educational programme in a timely manner. This ensures that children engage with a range of educational programmes suited to their individual needs, from mainstream provision to bespoke courses in animal care.

Children's wishes and feelings are highly prioritised. Staff encourage participation with the skilful use of open-ended questions such as 'What does trust look like to you?' or inventive techniques such as the use of colour coded beads to indicate

feelings and emotions. These strategies work very well and help children to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

The manager and staff help to build children's resilience after establishing close and trusting relationships with them. This helps children to feel safe and secure in their home.

Staff have access to children's social media accounts in order to complete regular checks, and they respond well to prompts regarding the risk posed by the internet.

Staff are extremely proactive when considering risk, and they use the principles of 'contextual safeguarding.' Recently, this included raising concerns regarding the safety of a local car park with the owners. This helped to ensure the safety of the children living at the home and all members of the local community.

Children benefit from intervention of an allocated psychotherapist. This helped one child to reduce incidents of self-harming behaviour by using kinetic sand. Prompt access to therapeutic support helps to ensure that children access specialist help at the right time.

Key-work sessions with children are highly effective and are completed using a range of resources. For example, staff use board games adapted to the key themes of child sexual exploitation in order to convey a serious message in a fun manner. Children engage well and can discuss issues that were previously very difficult for them to address.

Safeguarding practice is creative and inventive. Children benefit from a 'comfort kit' which includes a range of sensory items, including a squeeze ball and colouring book that children access in their own time when they are feeling unsettled. This helps children to manage their own behaviour.

Children going missing from the home is extremely rare. The most recent incident when a child was missing from home occurred in July 2021. This remains testament to the high levels of care that children receive.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leadership and management of the home is exceptional. Both the registered manager and her deputy have been working in the home since its opening. They are supported by two 'team leaders'. The consistency in leadership and management is of enormous benefit to children.

Leaders and managers value their staff team immensely and have a strong focus on nurturing and developing staff. Leaders and managers have negotiated an improved pay scale for staff in recognition of their specialist role and exemplary performance.

The has helped to improve staff retention and has promoted greater consistency for children.

All staff are highly committed and skilled in their role. Leaders and managers motivate staff by encouraging career progression, delegating key tasks and encouraging them to pursue their own learning and interests. An example of how this has impacted on children is that children now benefit from developing new mindfulness techniques.

Staff morale is very high and positive. One staff member commented, 'I love my job.' Staff are fully engaged in their roles and value regular supervision. However, the quality of performance appraisal is limited by the lack of feedback from children.

New admissions to the home are managed exceptionally well. Each new referral is screened by the host local authority multi-agency safeguarding panel. This ensures that key professionals, such as the local police, share information regarding possible risk of gang membership or criminal exploitation prior to any new admission to the home. This helps to safeguard children in the home and preserves placement stability.

Leaders and managers are inventive and highly ambitious. Specialist training on sensitive issues, such as sexuality, is sourced from a nationally recognised charity. In addition, the home received formal accreditation from a national body for its work with children. The resulting cash prize is due to pay for a forthcoming holiday for children.

The management review of quality of care report completed under regulation 45 does not include feedback from parents, which is a deficit. This limits an assessment of the home's development and the impact of the care offered to children.

Leaders and managers have addressed the two recommendations raised at the last inspection. This has resulted in improved supervision and training for agency members of staff.

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

- The registered person should ensure that they oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with each child's family/carers where appropriate. In particular, feedback from parents/carers to be recorded in the management monitoring report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)
- The registered person should ensure that performance appraisals consider the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and the views of the young people in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 13.5)

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 1 Putney High Street, London, Wandsworth SW15 1SZ

**Responsible individual:** Philip Townsend

**Registered manager:** Michelle de Souza

## Inspectors

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

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