

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 provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in September 2015. The registered manager left in May 2022. The registered manager's post is vacant. The head of operations facilitated this inspection.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. The inspectors spoke with two of the children.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 6 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/05/2021	Full	Good
17/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/07/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences of living at the home are variable. Children scored the home 'three out of 10' and 'five out of 10'. Professionals acknowledged that children are making some progress. Professionals also highlighted their concerns regarding new children moving into the home and the negative impact on the group dynamics. Children's relatives praised the home and they could not highlight any areas for improvement.

Children's educational progress is inconsistent. One child attends school irregularly. Staff do not know or understand why the child is reluctant to attend school. Staff advocate for children not enrolled in school to receive home tuition or alternative education. Additionally, they encourage children to engage in educational activities and informal learning. However, staff are not always successful at getting children to participate in these learning opportunities.

Children's views are promoted and staff support them with their personal development. Children participate in staff recruitment and contribute to menu and activity planning, and they helped develop the sensory room.

Children benefit from focused discussions with staff. These discussions help to build the children's resilience, confidence and self-esteem. They also enable children to discuss meaningful topics, such as peer pressure, homophobia, racism and self-harm.

Staff support children with their physical and emotional health. Staff benefit from specialist training from hospital staff. There is effective monitoring of children's diets and children are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children enjoy making smoothies, going to the gym and playing football and golf. Staff support children with their hobbies and interests, which include going to the theatre and the cinema, and attending police cadets and a youth club.

Some children have been able to return to their family home or move into semi-independent living. Since the last inspection, some children have attained notable achievements, including passing their GCSEs and getting a job. Children who used to live at the home come back to visit, and proudly inform staff of their aspirations for the future.

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

Not all children feel safe at the home and they reported 'feeling trapped'. Children attributed this to staff locking some communal doors in the home. There is a system in place where some doors automatically lock and only staff have a key to open and

close doors. Children gave an example of being locked in the kitchen. The locking of doors is undermining safety in the home.

Boundaries and structure are inconsistent, for example around staff's approach to children swearing. Staff do not manage incidents in the home swiftly, which can create a volatile environment where incidents escalate.

Children's risk assessments consider their vulnerabilities and the things they find upsetting. Staff regularly review children's risks with their social worker and other professionals. However, one child's risk assessment had not been updated with the agreed guidance regarding their mobile phone use. Shortfalls in recording in risk assessments undermine consistency in safeguarding practice, especially when new staff or agency staff are caring for children.

Children are receiving support to manage their emotions. Incidents of self-harm are reducing. Behaviour-management plans are appropriately detailed and effective. Consequently, staff do not have to physically restrain children.

Safeguarding allegations are appropriately managed. The local authority designated officer confirmed that they had no concerns about safeguarding practice at the home. Staff help children to understand the importance of personal safety. Staff and children actively discuss issues such as online grooming, sexting, knife crime and sexual and criminal exploitation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager's post is vacant. A new manager was appointed but they recently went on maternity leave. They have submitted an application to register with Ofsted. However, this application cannot progress until they return to work. A senior manager is currently managing the home on a part-time basis.

Staffing issues, including difficulties with recruiting permanent staff, are having a negative impact on the quality of care provided at this home. The issue of insufficient night staff is contributing to incidents during the night.

Monitoring and quality-assurance systems are weak. Children's records are not always accurate. The quality-of-care review does not include the views of parents or staff. Some staff use institutional language when recording information about the home.

Since the last inspection, some areas of the home have been redecorated and plants have been purchased to provide a more homely atmosphere. However, other areas of the home are not being well maintained. For example, the bathroom ceiling and hallway need repainting and the garden lawn is overgrown, which limits children's use of the garden.

Children benefit from a staff team that is resilient and enthusiastic. Staff feel supported both personally and professionally, and they find their work rewarding. Staff receive a structured induction to the home, ongoing training, regular supervision, annual appraisals and support from the organisation's therapy team. The latter specifically helps staff have a better understanding of children's emotional needs.

Leaders and managers are aware of the shortfalls and show capacity to improve the home. The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been suitably addressed. Staff work well with families and other professionals. Social workers and a child's relative praised the communication from staff. A social worker described staff as 'patient and thoughtful'. A child's advocate felt staff were 'very focused' and 'supportive'.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help a child who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(viii))</p>	31 October 2022
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those</p>	31 October 2022

expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(v))	
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e))</p>	31 October 2022
The system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of parents and staff. (Regulation 45 (5))	31 October 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that risk assessments are sufficiently detailed and clearly outline the strategies in place to manage children's mobile phone use. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home are well maintained. In particular, address the peeling paint on a bathroom ceiling, the wallpaper in a hallway and the overgrown grass in the garden. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. In particular, this refers to recording the child's correct legal status and using appropriate language when referring to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that children's access to all areas of the home are not restricted unnecessarily. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home must be rigorously assessed and regularly reviewed to

ensure that these restrictions are needed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

- The registered person should ensure that they work closely with the placing authority to understand the child's history and assess any possible negative impact that the child's arrival may have on the children living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.3)

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: 1159682

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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector
Maud Pipim-Addo, Social Care Inspector

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