

SC459857

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Assurance 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 provides care for up to six children with emotional and/or social difficulties.

The children's home has two additional emergency beds.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

Inspection date: 23 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 28 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

Relationships between staff and children are warm and consistent. One child said, 'I know that they [staff] really care about me. It isn't just a job for them.' Staff understand children's backgrounds and needs. They work hard to help children achieve their goals. Personalised planning encourages children to be forward-thinking, and they actively engage in many of the opportunities on offer. However, the support provided to help children re-engage with formal education has not achieved the intended results, as most children remain on part-time timetables delivered at home.

The home is busy and vibrant. Children are all involved in the life of the home. They interact with good humour with staff and other visitors to the home. Children's voices are heard and influence day-to-day planning. They have been involved in choosing the new kitchen and how the lounge is decorated. This helps them to develop a sense of belonging and pride in their home.

The safety of children

Risk is generally well understood, with appropriate action taken to address and reduce it. The manager and staff are professionally curious and assertive when working with external safeguarding partners. When incidents have occurred, they have generally been responded to in a timely and effective manner. New systems are in place to review critical incidents and identify learning, which is then cascaded to the team and reinforced in a variety of ways.

Staff have regular and purposeful discussions with children about risk, and this has helped to increase children's safety. Team meetings are used to review the effectiveness of care planning and to adapt it. This helps to build consistency and is particularly important given that some of the staff are relatively new in the role.

Despite this work, weaknesses do remain. The action taken by waking night staff is not always sufficiently robust or driven by a clear focus on safeguarding, particularly when children go missing from the home. The manager is aware and is taking action in the home to upskill these staff, ensure guidance is clear and ensure that better use is made of on-call arrangements. The wider organisation is also working to further strengthen overnight supervision across all homes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Improvements have been made since the last inspection, with staff benefiting from more regular and better-quality supervision. Debriefing sessions and learning from critical incidents are now used more effectively to inform practice so that it is more attuned to children's needs.

The manager understands the homes' strengths and areas for development, and progress is being made in the areas highlighted for improvement. The manager knows the children well and works effectively with the wider professional network. Social workers report that children are well cared for and that staff from the home work to deliver the objectives set out in care and placement plans.

The level of residential experience is limited for some staff, and there remains a need to fill key senior roles. Recruitment to these posts is currently underway, but if unsuccessful, alternative arrangements to support the manager will be required.

External monitoring is effective, and notifications to Ofsted are timely and demonstrate good management oversight and direction. The provider has continued to increase the range of therapeutic and educational specialists available to help inform and deliver care to children. This structure helps support the home and, in the short term, provides some of the additional senior capacity and oversight required while vacancies are filled.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/10/2019	Full	Good
13/08/2018	Full	Good

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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, review the effectiveness of strategies in place to overcome the barriers currently preventing children from attending full-time formal education.</p>	30 April 2023
<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 in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that missing incidents and any other safeguarding incidents are appropriately responded to by teams covering night-time shifts.</p>	30 April 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there are sufficient, suitably trained staff, including someone in a management role, on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children living at the home and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC459857

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

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

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Matthew King

Inspector

Martin Davis, Social Care Inspector

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