

2495375

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a national charity and provides a therapeutic model of care for up to nine children who have social and emotional difficulties. Staff use concepts and theoretical models drawn from social pedagogy and attachment theory. One of the nine beds available is a training flat to support children with their transition to independent living. The home accepts both planned and emergency admissions. It is a commissioned service for children living in the London Borough of Wandsworth.

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

The home was registered with Ofsted in November 2018. The manager was registered with Ofsted in February 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 30 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 May 2021

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: 12 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress in relation to their starting points. They quickly settle into the home, which gives them a sense of belonging. Children respond well to the nurturing, holistic and individualised care.

Children move out of the home in a positive and planned way. They have gone back to their family, into foster care, or into semi-independent and specialist accommodation. The home's outreach 'staying close' arrangement provides commendable ongoing support to these children.

Children benefit from an increased level of in-house support for home tuition. The home also offers children the opportunity to work towards vocational certificates. Children are taking exams and receive support to apply for courses, colleges and employment.

Children become more self-confident and staff support them to achieve their individual goals. Children's aspirations include attending university, becoming an entrepreneur, a mechanic or a sports coach. A notable achievement is a child attending an interview at a top university.

A wall in the home displays children's positive moments and achievements. Throughout the ongoing pandemic, children have enjoyed taking part in activities they like, such as movie nights. They have also enjoyed a trip to the seaside which included children who formerly lived in the home.

Children have a voice in the home, influencing their individual incentives, activity and menu planning and staff recruitment. Children enjoy discussing issues in the regular house meetings, where they also enjoy a takeaway. Decisions from house meetings, however, are not recorded to enable children to see how their views have been considered.

An ongoing issue is children's cannabis misuse, which some children said helps them to sleep. Staff consistently warn children of the dangers of cannabis misuse and make them aware that support is available from the substance misuse team. There are plans to introduce alternative methods of relaxation, which include comfort boxes and creating a sensory corner.

Children develop their independent living skills. Older children can manage their own budget and take responsibility for cooking for themselves. The home does not have a structured independent living plan; however, the registered manager plans to introduce an extensive checklist focused on this area.

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

Staff have a good understanding of attachment issues and work hard to ensure that the home is a stable base for children. This is particularly important due to the high proportion of children moving into the home in an emergency. One social worker highlighted 'managers are very good at responding to safeguarding'.

Staff receive safeguarding training, and know how to respond to child protection allegations. Safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately. Leaders and managers also participate in a borough-wide safeguarding forum.

Children learn about societal dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Staff highlight with children their vulnerability and the dangers of sexual and criminal exploitation, gang activity and knife crime. Children also receive specialist support to address specific issues, for example fire safety.

Children develop trusting and respectful relationships with staff, which enable them to openly share their concerns. Even though some children have left the home, the relationships they maintain with staff enable them to disclose personal issues. This enables professionals to work together in children's best interests.

Children benefit from good health arrangements and access to in-house art therapy. Since living at the home, there has been an improvement in children's emotional well-being. There has been no need for staff to physically restrain children and there are no issues with children causing damage to the home.

Staff focus on de-escalation and regularly measure children's well-being. There has been a decrease in children being missing from the home. Staff work in partnership with the police using an agreed protocol to ensure that they respond effectively when children are missing.

Children are more reflective, and they are learning to take responsibility for their actions. The reward system enables children to work towards personal incentives. Staff, however, do not consistently detail all the required information in sanction records.

The registered manager is commended for consulting children in the development of the home's locality risk assessment. Concerns in relation to each child are written in their personalised risk assessments and safety plans. However, these documents do not fully detail all the known contextual safeguarding information, regarding the risks outside of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers praised the resilience and proactivity of staff throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. One local authority senior leader confirmed, 'The team is committed to each individual child's best interests, often going above and beyond to really support some of our most vulnerable children.'

Staff praised the new registered manager, appreciating her management style. They have confidence in her abilities and her vision for the home. Staff morale has increased and the home benefits from a very supportive regional manager.

The registered manager has a good-quality assurance system. There is a strong awareness of the areas requiring further development and plans are in place to further improve the service. Leaders and managers have addressed the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection effectively.

Children are supported by a culturally diverse, competent, and caring staff team that takes pride in its work. Staff lead on specific areas of responsibility in their champion roles. Partnership working within the local authority focuses on having a clear strategy to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to the well-being and development of staff. Staff have regular individual supervision sessions, team meetings, annual appraisals and valued therapeutic support. Night staff benefit from their own meetings to address their specific issues.

Language in some records does not reflect the home's commitment to social pedagogy. An example is the use of the term 'on-site'. The introduction of two social pedagogy champions will help to ensure that all aspects of staff ways of working reflect the social pedagogy philosophy.

Children live in a home that is generally maintained to a very high standard. Communal areas include the lively kitchen-dining room, a gym, an education area, an art room, and a spacious lounge. The only shortfall is the underutilised back garden which has an overgrown lawn.

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
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iii))	1 July 2021
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of discipline in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and	1 July 2021

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, when the child is moving to live independently, staff support the child to develop emotional and mental resilience and practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure staff help children work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being, such as misuse of drugs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- The registered person should ensure staff detail the full range of steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. In particular, further address contextual safeguarding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful and clear recording. In particular, ensure record keeping reflects the principles of social pedagogy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure they provide a homely, domestic environment that includes the garden. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).

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: 2495375

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

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

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Tara McCrory

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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