

2495375

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Assurance 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 six children and a training flat to support children with their transition to independent living. It is a commissioned service for children living in the London Borough of Wandsworth. At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

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

Inspection date: 17 August 2023

Date of last inspection: 3 May 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, 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

The children living at the home benefit from positive and consistent relationships with staff who understand their needs. Children have individualised care plans that identify need and goals to help children to achieve their potential. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are up to date and responsive to emerging need.

Children have an opportunity to share their views about how their home is run through weekly young people's voice meetings. The outcome of the meeting is recorded in a 'You Said We Did' format so children can see how their views are influencing the care and support they receive. Children have been actively encouraged to participate in decisions about the decoration of the home and chosen colours for the walls as well as creating artwork for the home.

Children's interests are actively pursued by staff, so children have opportunities to participate and engage in a range of activities outside of the home. Staff attend children's reviews and share information about their progress to inform their care plans and seek specialist support when this is required.

A head of service advised the inspector: 'The registered manager and team are relational in their approach; they understand each of our children as individuals and tailor their care to need. The team talk about our children with care and affection, and see them through the lens of trauma, separation and loss, race, and identity.'

Key-work sessions support children to understand what acceptable behaviour is and expectations in the home. This helps children understand the potential consequences of harmful behaviour, including the impact on others. When children receive consequences, key-work sessions clearly record the reason for a loss of privileges. Records are written in caring language. However, this is not always consistent for all children.

Children know who to complain to if they are worried and are informed of their right to access an independent advocacy service if they wish.

Children live in a caring and nurturing home that is welcoming and spacious. The outstanding repairs and damage to the wall hangings identified at the last inspection have now been addressed. Further work is currently being scheduled, including replacing the stair carpet.

The safety of children

Children have individual risk assessments that are comprehensive and detailed. They identify protective factors, children's triggers, and strategies to manage and respond to risk. Risk assessments also consider community factors that may have an impact on behaviours and increase risks outside the home. Assessments are reviewed and updated monthly to ensure that they reflect emerging risk and need.

Children are supported by relevant professionals to reduce risk. For example, fortnightly network meetings take place with the placing authority that promote a joined-up approach to ensuring that children's needs are understood and met.

The majority of staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and restraint during their induction. However, not all bank staff have received restraint training. This could potentially lead to staff not feeling prepared or supported to manage challenging situations and unsafe behaviour effectively. When restraint is used, debriefs are provided to staff. This provides opportunities to reflect on the incident and explore whether alternative strategies could have been used to keep children safe. However, restraint records do not demonstrate that all children are offered debriefs following an incident requiring the use of restraint.

Comprehensive records of all incidents and restraints are maintained, and this helps to keep children and others safe. The registered manager has good oversight of the records.

Staff understand child protection procedures and what they are required to do should a child disclose a child protection concern, or they observe concerning staff behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have responded effectively and timely to the outcome of the last inspection in May 2023, and have created a service development plan to address the requirements and recommendations that were raised. The plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Managers and the placing authority have reflected on the instability that was created for some children moving into the home in emergency situations and for some children moving out in an unplanned way. As a result, leaders will not be providing emergency provision going forward, to prevent shortfalls in the quality of care for children. Leaders have also reduced the number of children that can live in the home from nine to six to ensure that staff can deliver high-quality care.

Effective communication and collaborative professional relationships promotes a holistic approach to ensuring that the individual children's needs are met. The home also offers an outreach service that provides additional support to parents of children who are on the edge of care. Staff also provide 'in touch' support to children who have left the home.

Staff spoken to during the inspection spoke positively about managers, who are approachable and supportive. Staff have access to monthly supervision and a comprehensive range of relevant learning and development opportunities, including being enrolled onto for their level 3 qualification once they pass their probation period. Staff with ambitions to become managers are provided with the opportunity to complete the relevant leadership and management qualification and have access to the organisations 'leadership passport', which aims to develop leadership skills and knowledge. Career progression is identified through annual appraisal, and development plans are put in place to support staff to achieve.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/04/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/05/2021	Full	Good
12/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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, The 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (e)) In particular, all staff working in the home should have access to de-escalation and restraint training.	15 September 2023

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 SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual: Laverne Cole

Registered manager: Tara McCrory

Inspector

Nicki Shaw, His Majesty's Inspector

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