

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

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 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: 12 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/05/2021	Full	Good
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: requires improvement to be good

Children have varying experiences and they make varying levels of progress. One child stated, 'It is quite nice here,' and they said they feel 'well supported'. Another child shared a less positive experience of the home. Social workers praise the trusting relationships children develop with staff, which enable children to make positive changes in their lives.

Children receive encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, one child has not attended their required health appointments. Although these have been rescheduled, further work is needed to help this child overcome their fears, in preparation for adult life.

The ways in which staff encourage children with their independent living skills are variable. There is a good example of an older child working with staff to create their own semi-independence plan. For another older child, however, their semi-independence plan had not been progressed. This has negatively impacted on the child's preparation to move into independent living successfully.

Staff support children to re-engage with their learning and prepare them for adulthood. The majority of children are attending school, undertaking apprenticeships or working. For some children who have not attended school for a long time, this is a significant achievement. Staff support children to work towards vocational certificates.

Children are offered a wide range of support which helps with their personal development and progress, such as learning mentors and art therapy. Staff work hard to understand and meet children's needs.

Children benefit from meaningful conversations with their key worker. These relationship-based open discussions enable children to talk about issues that are important to them. Children also receive the necessary support to achieve their goals.

Children have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities both in the home and in the community. These include going swimming, trips to the cinema and theatre, and to a motor racing track. Children's birthdays are celebrated, as well as festivals including Christmas and Eid.

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

The home is not always a safe place for children. There have been occasions when children have not felt safe. A child highlighted bullying as an issue and did not feel

that staff dealt with bullying effectively. A parent said they were 'very shaken and worried' about their child's safety.

Leaders, managers and staff do not always take swift action to secure children's safety. For example, an incident occurred during the night when a child alleged that they were threatened with a knife by another child. A management decision was made not to search the accused child's room until the following day. During the inspection, the registered manager could not readily access all records in relation to this incident.

Safety plans detail the range of actions staff take to keep children safe. Risk assessments and placement plans are comprehensive documents and demonstrate clear plans to support and help each child. Staff can also offer outreach support if children return home to their families.

Fire safety practices do not consistently protect children. Staff do not always record the weekly fire alarm tests. Other fire safety checks are, however, undertaken, including regular fire drills.

Staff encourage children to reflect on their challenges through problem-solving and solution-focused conversations. Staff clearly define their expectations regarding children's behaviour. This enables children to take responsibility for their actions and own personal growth.

Staff have a good understanding of children's trauma and their emotional needs. Staff go to great lengths to support children and help them to make safer choices. When children are reluctant to engage in positive activities, staff persevere and continue with their encouragement. This shows children that staff care.

The trusting relationships that children develop with staff help them to disclose their past experiences of abuse. Staff support children to develop strategies to manage their frustrations and negative feelings. Staff advocate for children when they raise complaints about other professionals' poor practice.

Staff educate children on their vulnerability, personal safety in the community and healthy relationships. When children are away from the home, staff make welfare calls and visits to the children to ensure that they are safe. Staff work well with the local police and specialist exploitation officers. Leaders and managers also share protocol with the police, which includes guidance on not criminalising children.

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

Leaders, managers and staff demonstrate commitment and resilience. It has been a challenging year caring for a large number of children, often in emergency situations. A senior local authority manager commended the home on the high level of support given to children. They said, 'We are satisfied the service is listening to our needs for those in our care.'

The majority of requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been met. However, some shortfalls in record-keeping continue. Sanction records do not always contain the required information. Some staff continue to use institutional language, such as 'on-site' and 'off-site', which detracts from a homely ethos. These repeated shortfalls do not evidence that managers are monitoring record-keeping effectively.

Children's achievements are not routinely evidenced in their records. Staff do not consistently complete the 'About me' form, which enables children to tell staff about themselves, their identity and their preferences. Although this is not a legally required document, it helps staff understand each child and what is important to them.

Children are cared for by staff who enjoy their work and who feel well supported. Staff benefit from a wide range of training, regular supervision and performance appraisals. Staff reflect continually on their practice, which helps them to gain a greater understanding of the children in their care.

The home is well resourced. Children have their own gym, an art room and a computer and education suite. The garden is a pleasant outdoor space where children can play basketball, enjoy barbecues and have fun in a large paddling pool in the warmer weather. Children also help with maintaining the garden by watering the plants.

The home has capacity to further improve. The manager has a child-focused development plan and ensures that the staff team receives a high level of support. Leaders and managers have good partnership arrangements with a range of professionals, which ultimately benefits children.

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 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 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)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	1 June 2022
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;	1 June 2022

understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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)(b))	1 June 2022
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	1 June 2022
The registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. (Regulation 25(a)) In particular, ensure that all fire alarm tests are recorded.	1 June 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a 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 that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual: Philip Townsend

Registered manager: Tara McCrory

Inspectors

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

Margaret Burke, Her Majesty's Inspector, Social Care

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