

SC025695

Registered provider: St Christopher's Fellowship

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to eight children who may have experienced harm as a result of abuse, neglect, family dysfunction, loss or other trauma. Staff use concepts and theoretical models drawn from social pedagogy and attachment theory in their work with the children. The home is run by a national charity and accepts referrals only from the host local authority.

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

The acting manager started working at the home on 2 February 2022. This individual is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 2 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/05/2019	Full	Good
09/04/2018	Full	Good
04/07/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides a nurturing place for children who have experienced trauma. Children have the opportunity to become more independent, resilient and confident, and they quickly settle into life at the home. Children are generally happy and their social workers express satisfaction with the quality of care they receive.

Staff are aspirational for children, supporting them to achieve their goals. One staff member said, 'You have to bring out the diamond in the young person, and, once out, polish it.' Staff also support children with accessing the appropriate health services, which includes mental health, substance misuse and sexual health services.

Children have an active voice at the home. They help with planning daily meals and group social activities, and were involved in the recruitment of the new manager. Children also support each other, for example acting as an interpreter when needed.

Currently, all the children living at the home travelled to the United Kingdom to seek asylum. Staff have a compassionate understanding of children's journeys, and children's inner strength is positively recognised. A displayed map of the world shows powerfully the journey both children and staff have taken to reach the United Kingdom.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, which helps children to develop a positive identity. Racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia are challenged, and cultural differences are celebrated. Documents are translated where necessary, and children are able to practice their cultural and religious traditions.

Children receive encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle through a balanced diet and exercise. Children benefit from a chef, who provides them with home-cooked meals and cookery lessons. The chef also offers older children escorted trips to the butchers and green grocers, as part of their training for living independently.

The majority of children are enrolled in college or attending a school. There are a range of educational resources for children. However, staff do not always provide suitable activities when children are not attending school. During the inspection, however, it was encouraging to see a child reading for their own enjoyment and practising their grammar skills.

Children's achievements include completing their GCSEs, obtaining accredited certificates and earning a sports award. Staff celebrate children's milestones, such as birthdays and moving into semi-independence with house parties. Older children benefit from receiving a weekly budget to buy their shopping and prepare their own meals.

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

Children confirm that they feel safe at the home. Leaders and managers identify when they are unable to keep a child safe. They work with the placing authority to ensure a smooth transition to a place which can better meet the child's needs.

A variety of new practices have been introduced to make the home a safer place for children. Night staff have a more effective way of working and they are better supported. Door sensors also assist with monitoring children's movements during the night.

Children receive ongoing support in regard to their personal safety. Staff identify, understand and manage effectively risks to children. Where there are concerns, leaders and managers actively involve the professional network, to safeguard the respective child.

Staff are familiar and responsive to children's complex needs. Research-informed interventions help staff to respond positively to trauma and help them to de-escalate potential incidents. The warm and empathetic interactions between staff and the children help with the development of mutually respectful relationships.

The home provides a stable base for children, and staff work hard to provide a homely family atmosphere. For some children, the number of times they do not return home on time is reducing. Children are learning to develop socially acceptable behaviour through their personalised reward scheme.

Children benefit from regular art therapy sessions and meetings with mental health professionals. Staff help to improve children's emotional well-being by offering them social activities, such as movie nights, going to football matches, theme parks and popular London attractions. Children also enjoy keeping fit, their weekly routines include going to the gym, boxing, playing basketball, cricket and football.

The organisation has a person who leads on safeguarding issues, and staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff know how to report child protection concerns within the organisation. A few members of staff, however, did not know the external agencies they could contact if they had any concerns regarding children.

Restraints are rare, but occasionally sanctions are used to help children to accept the consequences of their actions. When given, sanctions are appropriate and teach children the importance of reparation and self-responsibility. The only issue is that on one occasion, the effectiveness of a sanction was not recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Children benefit from dynamic senior leaders and managers who are actively involved in the running of the home. Their decisive action has helped with sustaining the good quality of care provided to children. A senior manager expressed their excitement regarding the home's 'journey of transformational change' and the wish to 'elevate social pedagogy practice'.

It has been challenging managing the home due to COVID-19, staff shortages and the need to ensure that staff have the skills and qualities for their roles. Staff receive support from performance improvement plans and ongoing training. If necessary, staff are redeployed to a more appropriate role.

The registered manager left the home in December 2021. The highly experienced regional manager has provided exceptional interim management support to the home. There are plans to further strengthen the management structure with two deputy managers, and a new manager has been appointed.

Staff say that they feel valued and that they take pride in making a positive difference to children's lives. Staff praise the supportive team, and agency staff commend the fact that there is no differentiation between themselves and permanent staff. Staff benefit from therapeutic support, a wide range of training, regular individual supervision sessions, check-in sessions and team meetings.

Leaders and managers have addressed the requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection effectively. Children benefit from improvements in the support they receive, the refurbishment of the bathrooms and a competent and consistent staff team. Leaders and managers know the home's strengths and they ensure that the home is continually improving.

There is a significant effort to make the house more comfortable and homely. Children can relax on new sofas, and stylish home accessories and fresh flowers contribute to the pleasant atmosphere. However, there is chipped paintwork in the stairway.

The home's quality assurance system is focused on enhancing children's quality of life. This includes purposeful quarterly meetings with the placing authority and constructive monthly monitoring reports from an independent person. However, the registered manager's quality of care report does not include comments from children, parents or staff.

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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii))	1 March 2022
The system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents and staff. (Regulation 45(5))	1 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that where children are not participating in education they are engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that information about whistle-blowing provides clear procedures for how a staff member can report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the stairway does not have chipped paintwork to provide children with a nurturing and supportive environment that meets their needs. '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: SC025695

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

Inspector

Sharon Payne, Social Care Inspector

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