

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 is run by a national charity and provides care for up to eight children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

There were five children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The home registered with Ofsted in July 2011. There has been no registered manager since December 2021.

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

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: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Good
13/05/2019	Full	Good
09/04/2018	Full	Good
04/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The majority of children have not settled well into the home. There have been several incidents between children that staff have been unable to manage due to their lack of appropriate skills and experience. One child moved out of the home following threats from other children. The high use of agency staff, particularly at night, does not enable children to develop positive relationships with staff.

Children do not engage in or make good progress in education. Staff have been unable to motivate children to attend school. Despite staff's efforts, only one child is attending school. Furthermore, most children do not access or complete the online work provided by schools. Staff provide structured learning and a range of educational activities for children; however, children do not always engage in this.

The impact and influence that staff members have on children are variable. Staff do not work with or interact positively with some children. Staff are not sufficiently experienced to deal with children who present with complex behaviours. Therefore, some children remain detached, despite having been in the home for several weeks.

Children's wishes and feelings are respected. Staff are creative and use a range of resources to enable children to express themselves. Children's complaints are consistently recorded and responded to. However, children's privacy is not always respected. Managers have installed door alarms on all the children's bedroom doors, and these connect to staff pagers. This form of surveillance has been installed without adequate consideration of children's rights and leaders and managers do not regularly review the purpose and need for the alarms.

Staff understand the importance of family to children and work hard to ensure that children's plans to spend time with their family are adhered to. They help children to manage their feelings about not living with their family. Staff show an interest in children's cultural backgrounds and promote children's identities. Managers and staff have positive relationships with parents.

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

One child reported that they do not feel safe in the home due to the high level of incidents and police call-outs to the home.

The admissions process for new children moving into the home is not sufficiently robust, particularly when children move in as an emergency. This limits the manager's ability to carry out a full assessment of children's suitability to live in the home.

Risk assessments are not regularly updated following significant incidents. Risk assessments include a chronology of all incidents but do not evidence that leaders and managers have evaluated incidents or identified strategies to help staff to manage incidents effectively. As a result, there have been a high number of police call-outs to manage children's behaviour. However, staff are alert to risk and know the children's vulnerabilities well. They work with other professionals, including social workers and the police, to discuss potential risks and safety plans.

On one occasion, leaders and managers did not escalate concerns to the local authority following an allegation made by a child against a member of staff, and chose to investigate this internally. This demonstrates that safeguarding policies and procedures are not always followed and compromises the safeguarding of children.

The number of missing-from-home incidents is very high. Return home interviews are not always undertaken with children, despite staff requesting these from the placing authority. Incidents of children going missing from home are managed well. Staff are proactive, and look for children in the local area. Staff ensure that they keep the relevant professionals updated when children are missing. Staff talk to children about the dangers relating to going missing and try to understand the reasons for children going missing.

Children are supported to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, there are some shortfalls in the safe administration of medication. For example, staff failed to consult with one child's doctor when the child continually refused to take their prescribed antibiotic medication. Leaders and managers have taken steps to address this.

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

The provider has failed to secure stability in the leadership and management of the home. The lack of a registered manager for the home has created a leadership gap, which has contributed to the inconsistency in staff practice. The provider has recently recruited a manager who plans to apply for registration with Ofsted.

Leaders and managers do not have robust quality assurance processes. There is a lack of critical management oversight of practice in the home. In addition, leaders and managers have not completed the required six-monthly review of the quality of care provided. This compromises the regulator's oversight of the home.

Staff benefit from regular supervision covering a broad agenda. Supervision sessions are reflective, offer staff support and guidance and consider the needs of children. Staff benefit from individual therapeutic support from a psychologist. However, some supervision records do not demonstrate this well, especially for agency staff. In addition, staff appraisals do not always include feedback from children and other professionals. This impacts on staff having the opportunity to talk about their practice and to have their learning and development reviewed.

Professional relationships with the children's networks are positive. Feedback from professionals is that staff attend relevant meetings and advocate well for children. However, feedback from parents is varied and some parents report that children are not always suitably assessed to live together.

The home's physical environment is safe for children. However, the home is not a warm and comfortable environment for children. Although some decoration has been completed, further work is required to improve the quality of the home environment.

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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they appoint a manager for the home and ensure that they register with Ofsted.	30 April 2023
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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if	30 April 2023

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(d)) Leaders and managers must ensure that all risks to children are thoroughly considered and assessed at the point of referral and that consideration is given to whether the staff have the knowledge, skills and experience to meet the needs of children placed in their care. Leaders and managers must ensure that all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities when protecting children from harm.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	30 April 2023

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)) Leaders and managers must ensure that they understand, monitor and review the quality of care provided to children and take effective action to address shortfalls in practice. Specifically, this is in relation to having clear, evaluative oversight of incidents and practices at the home.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c))	30 April 2023
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1) (a)(c)(d)) This specifically relates to the use of door alarms on children's bedroom doors and staff pagers to monitor children's movements.	30 April 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	30 April 2023

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—

the quality of care provided for children;

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment, they continue to decorate all areas of the home's interior. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive supervision of their practice from a suitable professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff supervision records reflect the needs and progress of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff performance appraisals consider the views of children and professionals who have worked with the staff member. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 60, paragraph 13.5)

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

Inspectors

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector
Zara Salim, Social Care Inspector

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