

Statement of Purpose

January 14th, 2025



'A Safe, fun, caring, motivating and supportive home'

This document fulfils the requirements of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 Schedule 1, and the Department of Education Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards (April 2015).

URN: SC052398

Dates revised:

- April 30th, 2025
- October 22nd, 2025
- January 2nd, 2026
- March 2nd, 2026
- June 1st, 2026
- July 29th, 2026
- September 1st, 2026

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Quality & Purpose of care

- **Introduction:**

The Statement of purpose is a requirement of the Children's homes regulations (England) 2015. The Statement is intended to provide a guide to Christopher's Cottage respite home for professionals, the public, external organisations and stakeholders.

This is a key document against which the home is inspected by Ofsted.

- **Ofsted inspection & rating**

Our recent Ofsted inspection was November 3rd & 4th 2025

Our current Ofsted rating is **Good**

A copy of the Ofsted report is available upon request. Alternatively, this can be looked up online at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/> and search using our URN **SC052398**

- **Statement of the range & needs**

Christopher's Cottage is a short break, respite home for Children and young people with Learning disabilities. The Children and young people that access overnight respite at Christopher's cottage may require personal care, medication and behavioural support with learning and achievements

- **Ethos of the home**

Our ethos within Christopher's Cottage is to make a positive difference to the personal, social and learning lives of the young people who stay. We provide an individualised and child-centred approach to the care of our young people and work in partnership with parents / carers, the community and other professionals.

We strive to create a positive environment where our young people will be offered experiences and opportunities to help them achieve their aspirations and goals in life.

- **Accommodation offered**

Christopher's Cottage is a purpose built independent residential facility that offers young people of both genders aged between 5 years and 18 years (up to their 18th birthday) with a range of complex needs who have a diagnosed learning disability, the opportunity to develop their personal independence skills whilst accessing overnight stays.

The children and young people that access Christopher's Cottage require personal care, medication, behavioural management and support with learning and accessing their community.

Christopher's Cottage is able to provide overnight, short break care for up to six young people at a time and the maximum number of nights does not exceed 120 nights for any one child.

Christopher's cottage provides overnight respite during the school term time, school holidays and weekends.

Christopher's Cottage provides each young person with their own bedroom with an en-suite shower and toilet. It has six bedrooms for young people. One of these rooms has a rise and fall bed for any young person with a physical disability, and a shower chair for use in the en-suite wet room. There are also two additional bedrooms for sleep in staff.

In addition to the above it provides:

Lounge
2 PC's & a telephone for young people's use.
Craft/messy room
Soft playroom with a ball pool
Dining room
Fully equipped kitchen
Bright airy foyer area with a glass pyramid roof.
Games room
Sensory room
Laundry room
Non-residents WC
Access to a special needs' friendly sports hall and swimming pool
Enclosed patio area with large sandpit
A safe, secure field/play area, bike track
Safe space bed

- **Location of the home**

The home is located on the grounds of The St. Christopher School, Mountdale gardens, Leigh-on-sea, Essex, SS9 4AW.

The home is close to all local amenities, such as

Shops
Parks
Seaside
Bowling
Soft play centres
Cinema
Woods
Roller skating
Theme park

- **Arrangements for supporting cultural, linguistic & religious needs of the children**

We strive to be inclusive and sensitive to the individual needs and aspirations of Children, young people and their families. We also aim to be family orientated and culturally competent, respectful of children and young people who have a diverse range of needs and backgrounds. All the children and young people who receive overnight respite are valued as individuals, with different needs and individual rights.

The values deriving from different backgrounds are recognised and respected at all times. Within the care planning process, the team recognise different in relation to ethnicity, culture religion, diet and sexual orientation where they may exist.

Dietary needs and individual preferences are recognised and are included in the menu planning process.

- **Complaints**

Parents/Carers will be kept fully informed about our facility. We ensure communication channels remain open and honest.

Any complaints should be raised in the first instance with the Management team or Responsible Person. If there is a complaint about the above, then contact the Chairman of the Governors. The party also has the right to contact Ofsted.

Young people and their representatives are advised that concerns and complaints will be dealt with quickly and sympathetically. Christopher's Cottage uses any concerns or complaints as an opportunity to improve the level and standard of the service they provide.

Within Christopher's Cottage, we have developed various ways in which our Children and young people can make formal and informal comments, observations, or complaints. These include;

- An Accessible Children's guide, which can be found in all Children's bedrooms. This includes information on how to make a complaint and where to find support in doing so.
- A posting box system that is freely used within the lobby area, with a range of tools such as symbols and tick boxes to ensure varying levels of communication are catered for.
- A Children and young people's feedback form, which they are supported to complete monthly, where possible.
- Children may also be visited by their social workers, which offers further independent opportunity to feedback in regards to the service they receive.
- They will have the opportunity to speak to the independent visitor or Ofsted inspector, if they are in during their visit to the home.

We are committed to receiving feedback from our service users and families, whether this be positive, or indicating dissatisfaction with the service provided. Complaints and compliments are monitored by the Regulation 44 visits each month, as well as the management team.

Christopher's Cottage has a separate telephone line for the Children and young people should they wish to contact their families, social workers or anyone who advocates for them.

Children and families are also able to make a complaint to Ofsted or the Children's commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza at:

Office of the Children's commissioner, 0800 528 0731

Advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Alternatively

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store street

Manchester

M1 2WD

0300 1231231

Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

- **Access to the homes Child protection and behaviour management policies**

Christopher's Cottage has a Child protection policy. This policy is available in paper form, located in the policies and procedures folder in the office, on a shared computer drive and available to Children, young people, families, carers, professionals and others involved in care and protection of a child upon request.

The home takes child protection seriously and has vigorous procedures in place to safeguard the young people that access Christopher's Cottage. During staff recruitment, all potential employees have reference checks followed up by a telephone conversation and are not offered a post unless these are satisfactory, and a Disclosure and Barring Service check shows that there are no causes for concern.

Staff new to the service undergo an induction process which ensures they are aware of their responsibilities towards children and young people.

All staff receive annual safeguarding training where clear definitions of abuse, identifying signs and symptoms of abuse are explained. The procedures for reporting any concerns are described in this training.

We aim to keep all our young people as safe as possible whilst undertaking acceptable risks. All young people have individual risk assessments that are regularly updated, and each activity has its own risk assessment.

Christopher's Cottage also has a Therapeutic Behaviour support policy, available in the above formats and upon request.

Views, Wishes & Feelings

- **Consulting Children, young people & families**

All staff at Christopher's Cottage recognise that every child has a "voice" and the right to be listened to. Children and young people are encouraged to be open and express their feelings and opinions. Staff do this through each individual's preferred method of communication.

Regular consultation takes place with children and young people regarding their experience of Christopher's Cottage and how they would like the service to develop.

Christopher's cottage recognise that Children and young people should be offered opportunities, choice and control where appropriate.

Consultations are part of our everyday work, however, the below illustrates some of the other methods we use.

- Post box system, user friendly informal way to ascertain views
- Choices in the meals provided
- Children's consultation book
- Direct observations from staff
- Analysis of behavioural incidents
- Annual Children's consultation forms
- Feedback from parents / carers and other involved professionals

- **The homes policies & approach to anti-discriminatory practice, and the rights of the children**

Christopher's Cottage works within the Equality Act 2010. This act protects people in the workplace and wider society from discrimination.

Discrimination can come in any of the following forms;

- Direct discrimination – treating someone with a projected characteristic less favourably than others.
- Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- Harassment – unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation – treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment.

Protected characteristics are described as

- Age
- Gender or sexual orientation
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or having a child
- Disability
- Race – including colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin.
- Religion, belief or lack of religion / belief.

Christopher's Cottage has an Equality & diversity policy in place that all staff adhere to. No child or groups of children, or their families will be discriminated against. Our staff will not judge or treat Children at Christopher's Cottage or their family unfairly or unequally.

Should staff become aware that an individual or family is experiencing discriminatory practice, they will offer immediate support and promptly address the needs of all concerned. This will then be passed on to management to investigate or raise further as necessary.

Anti-discriminatory measures in place to protect Children and their families include;

- Careful observation and monitoring
- Accurate case recording
- Being vigilant in the Care worker role
- Having an understanding of the Child's or family's needs
- Raising concerns with others

The concept of the 'best interests' of the child is paramount in the values of Christopher's Cottage. The home is committed to promoting the rights of children with disabilities and ensuring they are able to make a meaningful contribution and achieve their goals and aspirations.

Where possible children are involved in their care planning, as well as their parents or carers. Inclusion is achieved by accessing mainstream activities such as;

- Cinema
- Bowling
- Meals out
- Youth clubs
- Community events

Education

- **Supporting children with Special Educational Needs**

Children & young people who access Christopher's Cottage will continue to attend school / college as part of their daily routine.

Parents are responsible for organising any transport requirements that may be needed, unless prior arrangements have been agreed and made prior to their child's stay.

Staff will develop positive relationships with all Children's and young people's transport staff – including PA's and ensure that communication between Christopher's Cottage, home or school is fluent

Schools that our children and young people attend are;

The St Christopher School Academy Trust (Leigh on Sea)

Kingsdown Special School (Southend on Sea)

Lancaster School (Westcliff on Sea)

Glenwood Special School (Benfleet)

Pioneer School (Basildon)

Ravensbourne School (Romford)

Treetop's school (Grays)

Corbets Tey school (Upminster)

Chatten Free School (Witham)

Helen Alison School (Gravesend)

Meadowfield School (Sittingbourne)

Fordwater school (Chichester)

Harlow Fields School & College (Harlow)

Some children and young people have a home / school diary to help ensure the consistency of care between all carers and enable information sharing. This enables staff to gain an insight into the child or young person's day and help reinforce and praise events and achievements that day/week.

There is always a close liaison between the home, families, and school.

The importance of education is acknowledged. If Children and young people bring homework in, staff will assist with this where necessary and they are encouraged to complete tasks. There is a wide range of resources available at Christopher's Cottage, including PC's, iPad, books, arts and craft materials and toys. As well as opportunities for shopping, cooking and baking amongst others.

- **Supporting education and educational achievements**

Christopher's Cottage attend school reviews and make visits to schools to see their teachers, support workers or other staff involved in the child or young persons education. Christopher's cottage will work closely with the school and families to identify targets / areas of development that can be worked on at the home.

Management liaises closely with school to discuss any areas of concern or improvement with either the young person or services

Cottage staff attend school events (concerts and productions) and school are always invited to participate in reviews and planning meetings. We currently have excellent liaison with the schools above and attend the educational reviews and Joined up Meetings for many of our young people.

Enjoyment & Achievement

- **Activities within the home**

Christopher's Cottage provides a relaxed and informal setting where young people can take responsibility for negotiating activities they would like to undertake during their stays. We offer an extensive variety of activities that take into account a young person's likes, choices, needs and aspirations.

Personal hygiene, shopping and food preparation will form a part of the intended learning experiences for all young people using the facility as will the planning and implementation of social and life skills activities, excursions and experiences.

A safe and secure patio area with specialist play equipment, a large sand pit and water play are available as are three large trikes suitable for all ages to ride.

Access to our own purpose-built craft room and encouragement to join in regular celebrations and festivals are promoted.

Vehicles and drivers are available for our young people to access their local community. Children and young people will also be given the opportunity to explore the community using public transport with the home being on a local bus route and only 5 minutes from the nearest train station.

Young people are encouraged to attend their regular tennis lessons, sports clubs, cubs, scouts etc. when accessing respite.

The home has good links with local clubs specifically designed for young people with learning Disabilities such as Mencap, Chris Cross, Just Ride and Kids Kingdom etc.

Health

- **Health care provided within the home**

Christopher's Cottage is able to provide services for young people that have a range of additional health problems. These include epilepsy, asthma, eczema, ADHD and those that take medication for other conditions.

Consent for medication and medical treatment is requested at the planning stage and must be present before any treatment or medication can be administered by staff. Any member of staff giving medication will have passed the "Administration of Medication" training course.

As Christopher's Cottage is a respite home, all young people are still registered with their own G.Ps, dentists and opticians but all this information is on their individual files if required.

For those young people with Epilepsy who require emergency medication there will be a specific Medical Care Plan identifying the procedures to follow in the event of a seizure. Staff are trained by our local specialist epilepsy nurse on how to administer this if required.

Young people will be encouraged to develop healthy living practices during their stays. Staff will play a significant role in promoting these and work towards our young people being able to take care of their own personal health.

Health is also explored through play, social stories and activities.

- **Rebound Therapy**

The home has 4 qualified rebound therapists and is now able to implement Rebound therapy as part of the children and young people's overnight respite.

Every child and young person will be provided the opportunity to participate in Rebound therapy, with consideration given to any conditions or needs of each individual, prior to beginning.

All rebound therapy for each individual is recorded and documented in their own individual case record. The benefits for Rebound therapy are

Physical

- Improved flexibility
- Co-ordination
- Balance & posture
- Fluency of movement
- Height & Depth perception
- Stamina
- Helps to strengthen limbs,
- Improve muscle tone
- Increase exercise tolerance

Cognitive

- Helps develop attention, listening, speech & language skills
- Improve concentration and communication skills
- Helps children & young people to follow instruction

Social

- Helps develop social skills
- Helps develop independence
- Eye contact and work with others

Emotional

- Increase confidence
- Increase self-esteem

- Fun & therapeutic activity to alleviate tension

Positive relationships

- **Promoting between families & friends**

Christopher's Cottage is a Short Break Facility; therefore, the aim is to provide a safe, caring, fun, stimulating and supportive environment for young people to enjoy short breaks away from home whilst also giving their families a break.

Parents are welcome to contact Christopher's Cottage at any time during the young person's visit. No young person can be collected by a person not known to staff without prior authorisation from the family and evidence of identity.

Christopher's Cottage operates an "open door" visiting policy, and subject to any legal orders, contact can be made with a young person at any time during their stay. As many of our activities include outings outside our facility parents/carers, social workers etc. are asked to notify staff beforehand if they are intending to visit, in order to ensure the young person is onsite.

Young people are able to call their families at any time if necessary and staff will support them

Christopher's cottage host coffee mornings for parents / carers to come in chat to staff and have a look around the home.

Social workers and other professionals are also welcome, where they too can speak to staff, and look around.

Protection of Children

- **Approach to monitoring and surveillance**

The young people at Christopher's Cottage are provided with support and supervision based on their individual needs. Young people receive 1:1 care. However, if it is felt that a young person requires an increase or decrease in their level of staffing this can be implemented.

The home has an electronic door alarm system on all external doors and has CCTV cameras in all rooms with external doors. All areas are recorded on the school security system, but no recording or downloading of footage will be carried out without informing parents/carers in accordance with CCTV procedures.

The CCTV policy is reviewed throughout the year, with feedback from parents and professionals, giving their views on its use and necessity.

If required, the bedrooms can be fitted with auditory or visual monitors which allow staff to maintain a young person's safety. These are intended to support those who may have specific health needs e.g., epilepsy, and is not intended as an invasion of privacy. This will be agreed with parents during the planning meeting and will be part of their individual care plan.

- **Behavioural support**

Young people are encouraged to demonstrate positive behaviour whilst at Christopher's Cottage; this is also modelled by staff at the home. Christopher's Cottage is a community in which behaviour is based on mutual respect and consideration for others. Pastoral care and discipline are the responsibility of all the staff. The relationships which they are able to build with the young person are key to staff being able to deal with any young person's difficulties and problems.

Our approach has a strong emphasis on preventative strategies and partnership and the home liaises closely with families, the young person's schools and other relevant professionals to look at specific behaviours, and identify the most appropriate way to support our young people

Positive Support Plans (Therapeutic Support Plans) are developed by staff and are agreed by the Management, parents and the young person when appropriate. These are reviewed on a regular basis.

All staff supporting the young people are trained in positive behaviour management strategies using the accredited Therapeutic Thinking guidelines as to the expectations placed upon them for the management of young people using the facility. Staff support is also provided via team meetings, supervision, debriefing and review.

Leadership & Management

- **Registered provider**

The St Christopher School Academy Trust
Mountdale Gardens
Leigh on Sea
Essex
SS9 4AW

- **Responsible person's details**

Dan Woodman, CEO
The St Christopher School Academy Trust
Mountdale Gardens
Leigh on Sea
Essex SS9 4AW
Telephone: 01702 524193
Fax: 01702 526761
Email:
Web: www.thestchristopherschool.co.uk

Qualifications:

BA Hons Humanities, M.Ed The Education of Maladjusted Children, PGCE, DMS (Ed), NPQH
Career to Date: Qualified teacher, specialising in children with Special Educational Needs (34 years). Executive Head teacher of SEN trust Southend, a special school multi academy trust comprising of The St. Christopher's school, St. Nicholas school, Kingsdown school and Lancaster school. Member of the Federation for Leaders in Special Education (Eastern Region).

- **Registered Managers details**

Beckie Shelford
Christopher's Cottage
C/O The St Christopher School Academy Trust
Mountdale Gardens
Leigh on Sea
Essex
SS9 4AW

Telephone: 01702 507602
Fax: 01702 526761
Email: Rshelford@tscs.sentrustsouthend.co.uk
Web: www.thestchristopherschool.co.uk/respice

Qualifications:

Level 5 diploma in leadership for health and social care and children and young people's services (England).
NVQ Level 3 Residential Childcare, Diploma Level 3 Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), Designated Safeguard lead, Therapeutic thinking Tutor (theory), Makaton Levels 1 – 4, Emergency first aid, Health & safety tutor
Medication administration, Epilepsy and Buccal Midazolam Administration, Asthma and Anaphylaxis, Food hygiene, Infection control, Fire Marshal train the trainer

All of the above are regularly reviewed and updated according to the needs of any new and current young people.

- **Staffing structure**

Responsible individual – Dan Woodman

Registered Manager – Rebecca Shelford

Assistant Manager – Leanne Partlett

Senior Residential Care Assistants (x2)

Residential Care Assistants (x9)

Admin Assistant (x1)

Plus a team of Bank staff.

- **Staff experience, Qualifications & Supervisions**

The Cottage Manager will be responsible for the satisfactory implementation of the day-to-day running arrangements and future development with the Responsible Person as their direct line Manager.

Sufficiently qualified staff will be appointed to enable the residential home to meet the needs of the young people in residence at any time. A pool of additional staff will be identified to act as back-up support (Bank) for the permanent team. These staff may already work with Children with disabilities and have experience and qualifications in working with Children & young people with a range of special needs.

All staff have supervision sessions that are regular and proportionate to the hours worked. Staff are also involved in annual performance management appraisals which highlight continuing training and development needs.

There are three different types of supervision carried out at Christopher's Cottage.

1. Full supervision
2. Self-reflective supervision
3. Health & Well-being supervision

The supervisions carried out are alternated each month, with full supervision taking place every quarter.

All permanent staff are required to hold the NVQ or Diploma level 3 in Residential Childcare or equivalent. All staff either have this qualification or are currently on course to complete.

Mandatory training is completed annually as Continuing Professional Development.

Emergency first aid at work, fire safety, safeguarding and child protection training is carried out annually or when required, as well as any specific health or disability training required for individuals.

Christopher's Cottage has a team containing a mix of both male and female staff which allows for the provision of appropriate role models for young people of both genders

Care Planning

- **Admissions to the home**

Admission procedures will include pre-visits for children and their carers prior to any application. A comprehensive assessment visit is undertaken by The Manager or Assistant Manager where detailed application forms are completed in order for Care Plans, Risk Assessments and Placement Plans to be written. Assessment visits may also include visits to schools, homes etc.

These can only begin once a referral form has been received from their social worker or placing authority.

Emergency admissions will only be possible where the application is made on behalf of a child who already has an allocation with Christopher's Cottage and/or is known to the staff. It is also dependent on the mixture of children in residence at that time to ensure everyone's safety.

Once all information has been gathered, the management will complete a referral decision form and notify the social worker, local authority and parents of the decision and reasons for that decision.

As each young person is unique, the introduction process varies from young person to young person. For most of our children and young people, a gradual and planned approach to beginning overnight stays at Christopher's Cottage works best. A number of tea visits may precede an overnight stay which enables staff to assess how they are coping.

Review dates & amendments			
Date	Reviewed / Amended	Reason for Amendment	Amended by
5 th September 2023	Amended	Therapeutic thinking framework	Dan Lambert
19 th August 20224	Amended	- Rebound Therapy, - staffing update, - new school added	Dan Lambert
2 nd January 2025	Amended	Supervision frequency & variations	Dan Lambert
April 30 th , 2025	Updated	New telephone number	Dan Lambert
October 22 nd , 2025	Reviewed	No changes made	Dan Lambert
January 14 th , 2025	Amended	Ofsted Inspection & rating added	Dan Lambert
March 3 rd , 2026	Amended	Change of management	Beckie Shelford
June 1 st , 2026	Reviewed	No changes made	Beckie Shelford
July 29 th , 2026	Updated	Details changed - Interim Manager changed to Registered Manager	Beckie Shelford
September 1 st , 2026	Updated	Details changed for RI & updates on staffing	Beckie Shelford

Sent to		
Date	Sent to	Sent by
March 3 rd . 2026	- Ofsted - Independent visitor (N. Anson) - Southend City Council - Essex County Council - Thurrock Council - London Borough of Havering Council - West Sussex Council	Beckie Shelford
September 1 st , 2026	- Ofsted - Independent visitor (N. Anson) - Southend City Council - Essex County Council - Thurrock Council - London Borough of Havering Council - West Sussex Council	Beckie Shelford