

**St CHRISTOPHER'S**  
**CREATING BRIGHTER  
FUTURES**



# impact report

# 2020



We worked with **1,718**  
young people in 2018-19



## Happy birthday St Christopher's!

**150 years is a long time. Every time my birthday comes around I get worried about whether I have done enough and what the future will be like. Then I look back on the year and see how much I have done and how far I have come.**

It must be the same for St Christopher's. Since 1870 you must have done so much, changed so many young people's lives and become something really great. I don't know too much about all of the last 150 years but I can tell you about my time living there.

St Christopher's helps children in care and care leavers in all kinds of ways. They have homes to live in, support with getting jobs, education, mental health help, and people who visit you in the community. I lived in one of their children's homes so I can only talk about that, but this Impact Report tells the stories of young people who have been helped in lots of ways.

When I first came to St Christopher's I was scared but I found it hard to tell anyone, so I didn't really say too much and felt a bit angry with people. People were there to help me but I felt like it was safer to keep them away. But gradually I started to trust them and see the way they were with other young people who lived there. I can't remember when but I just started to let them get to know me. As they

got to know me, I started to really get to know myself too. They always forgave me, saw the best in me and made me think good things about myself.

The staff in the home always believed in me and found so many interesting things for me to do like football coaching, cooking, construction courses – and they never gave up. They would wake me up, travel with me and stay nearby in case I found things difficult. When I was scared to go back they would build my confidence and make me feel like I could do it.

Now I have left St Christopher's I have a job and am doing all of this for myself. But without St Christopher's believing in me I don't think I could have got to this place where I believe in myself. **The best thing for me was that I met people who seemed to really care. They understood my struggles and it felt like it was more than just a job for them.** I still see one of the staff from my home regularly and they help me keep in touch with the other young people I lived with. I am so pleased about this because otherwise you leave and lose all those memories.

All of this seems worth celebrating. So I wanted to wish St Christopher's a happy birthday and good luck for the next year, where I hope there will be lots adventures and successes like mine.

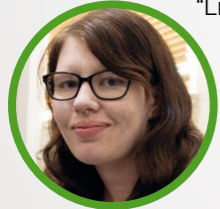
Rosie

# 150 years of brighter futures

**Over the last 150 years we have supported thousands of people. We were set up by three school friends in 1870 as *Homes for Working Boys* to help boys and young men living in poverty. Since then we have adapted our services as times have changed so that we offer relevant care and support. We caught up with three people who lived with St Christopher's in the past.**

## Life after St Christopher's

**Kerrie**



"Living with St Christopher's was without a doubt the best place I've ever lived so far! It was the first place that felt like a home. Compared to other places, I feel like they genuinely care about young people and want us to succeed. They try to work with us, rather

than coming in and out of our lives at a confusing and vulnerable stage and just expecting us to adapt to them. Staff also understood my disability needs so I felt safe to approach them and ask for what I needed.

My favourite memory of living at St Christopher's was their This Is Me art exhibition because I showed three pieces of my art there. It was nice to see the work of other people from different St Christopher's homes because it made it more of a shared experience.

I think it's odd to be in care and have all these strange adults around who make massive decisions about your life and then just leave and you're not meant to talk to them anymore. I still see the manager who worked in my St Christopher's home, which I really enjoy!

I've just started university, studying a BA in Animation, and I volunteer regularly at Mind and Ambitious about Autism. With the latter I am part of a research team looking into the effects of the Children and Families Act 2014 on education for autistic students.

In the future I want to work in animating children's films or in advocacy for those with autism or for children in care, particularly in a job where I can be creative. When I am older and have a partner I would love to adopt a child because I think it is sad how many children don't have parents or forever families or even feel loved. All children – and adults – should feel loved and cared for."

**Jason**



"There was always someone there to say hi or what's up when I lived at St Christopher's. I felt I could progress quickly whilst living there, and found security. My key worker was a pivotal figure in helping me get my foot onto the first rung of the career

ladder, and we are still in touch to this day.

**"I feel like they genuinely care about young people and want us to succeed." Kerrie**

Since then I have got married, set up my own insurance business, and taken part in mentoring. Next we would like to have children – we have been going through IVF, which you need a lot of resilience for – then growing and selling the business. I would love to watch sporting events across the globe, dragging my wife and kids with me!"

**Subrina**



"I definitely had good times at St Christopher's. I didn't think I was ready to live on my own but that was how the care system worked – I had to move out of my foster mum's and into supported housing.

Luckily there was a key worker who was so lovely and helpful, and a link worker who would see how I was getting on with budgeting, going to college and working, and all those other life skills you need.

My flat was really nice; I shared with two other women, including one who I am still friends with today. Because I lived with people who had different life experiences it was like seeing the reality of society. Nobody was excluded, and it made me more empathetic and less judgmental.

Living on your own at such a young age is new and a bit scary. I remember not wanting to leave when I had

to move into my own flat, but my mentor said I could always speak to her about anything, from doing laundry to getting furniture.

Now I am a freelance hairdresser – I was doing the apprenticeship when I lived at St Christopher's. I think when you have humble beginnings you think small because you just want to be able to cope. I dreamt about being established and respected in my career, but never thought it would be a reality! My career has developed in a way that I could never have imagined.

In the future I wouldn't mind mentoring young people in hairdressing to help them avoid the mistakes that I made, because I was really helped by my own mentor. We didn't have the exact same experiences but she had faced challenges too. It made me realise that my background couldn't stop me achieving everything I wanted to do. Without my mentor I wouldn't have gone for opportunities or even taken the leap in confidence to know I could be self-sufficient.

When you're young and having to be independent in supported housing, it can feel like there is a long way to go to get to where you want to be. But I want every young person to know that they can do it!"

# St Christopher's strategy 2018-2023

**St Christopher's strategy was co-developed with young people and staff from across the organisation. Our vision is for every child and young person to be safe, loved & happy, to achieve their potential and have a bright future.**

By 2023, we want to create brighter futures for double the number of children and young people, and there are three key strands where we are targeting our work.

So, what have we been doing to achieve this ambition and what will we be doing next?

## 1 More excellent homes, fostering and support

- Embedding our frontline Trusted Spaces service to support young people involved in gangs and knife crime
- Growing our fostering service in the Midlands to offer more safe, caring homes for children and young people
- Opening children's homes that provide care and support for between one and four young people, with opportunities for them to transition between services based on their needs whilst maintaining relationships with the staff they want to stay connected to
- Designing a support service for young people aged 10-14 whose older siblings are involved in the youth offending system, launching in partnership with Barnet Council and the Youth Endowment Fund
- Providing solutions about the challenges of finding and sustaining appropriate accommodation for care leavers to the Isle of Man Government
- Lobbying the UK government for changes to unregulated services

**"We are impressed with the quality of the staff of St Christopher's, whom we found to be compassionate and dedicated, the standard of the services it provides, and its provision of services beyond its contractual obligations."**

Isle of Man Tynwald Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People 2018-19

## 2 Improved emotional wellbeing

- Developing a therapeutic model for our children's homes, supported housing and foster families in the UK, based on our successful Wraparound service in the Isle of Man
- Using the Mind Of My Own app to support foster children to share their views with professionals
- Taking part in government discussions to shape financial education for children in care and care leavers, and featuring in their 'Care to talk about Money? The Importance of Financial Education for Children in Care' report
- Giving feedback on Home Office consultations about Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) and the new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence, based on the things that young people tell us they want the government to understand
- Revamping our annual consultation with young people so that it is tailored to each home and introduces individualised change programmes at each service, such as a three month cooking course and the introduction of a text alert to let young people know about upcoming activities
- Working with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and featuring as a best practice case study in their report 'No Place at Home: Risks facing children and young people who go missing from out of area care placements'

## 3 Lifelong learning and thriving

- Embedding Staying Close plans as standard practice across all our residential and semi-independent homes for whenever a young person moves on from St Christopher's, regardless of the circumstances or how long they lived with us
- Submitting feedback to the Department for Education's call for evidence on the children's homes workforce, so we can make sure the right people are hired to protect and care for young people
- Introducing Support Into Employment, a new project giving care leavers on the Isle of Man the confidence and skills to enter the workplace and climb the career ladder
- Supporting young people to use the Diamond Fund to help them to access education, training and employment



**I can rest easy knowing my young people are at St Christopher's."**

Local authority social worker

## Shaping regulation in supported housing

**Over the last 150 years, St Christopher's has developed expertise and knowledge about how to support young people in homes where they feel safe and cared for – and lots of this learning has come directly from the people we support. We believe this willingness to learn from our children has enabled us to develop brilliant, life-changing services.**

Take our semi-independent homes in the UK. These services are not regulated. But we feel that to give young people the best support and care, we need to monitor the service that they receive and make sure we can continuously improve.

That's why we developed our **16+ inspection framework** in collaboration with young people and local authority experts. The framework draws on the standards set by Ofsted for leaving care services so that we can benchmark what we do and ensure young people are looked after just as well as they would be in residential care or fostering.

These independent inspections take into account feedback from young people, staff, social workers and partners to give a rounded view of the service we provide. Young people are inspectors too, writing their own summaries of what they see in our homes.

**"The team understand young people's interests and then create opportunities for them to foster their talents and develop their self-esteem... young people are supported but don't have staff doing things for them or leaving them to do it alone. They seem to find a way to do it together."**

Young person's inspection report

Regulation does not automatically produce quality services, but we believe scrutiny and evaluation need to be in place. For us, this can be achieved through reviving effective frameworks to scrutinise supported housing in the right way.

**"I was very impressed by the interaction between young people and staff and it was evident that the working relationships are promoted and that there is respect and a relaxed atmosphere."**

16+ inspection report

We make sure our views represent the spectrum of services, staff and young people that make up St Christopher's. By giving our young people a voice in our contributions, we hope we will make changes that improve the lives of all children in care and care leavers.



**How can corporate parenting just stop at 18? How can that one day just change everything and all of a sudden you go from having everyone around you being part of your ‘parenting’ team to having no parents at all. That’s not right, someone should still have your back and want you to succeed.”**

Young person quoted in Tynwald Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People 2018-19

## Building a safety net for care leavers

**Staying Close isn’t just something we talk about. It is something we do in practice to keep in touch with young people after they move on – checking in on young people, meeting up with them for a game of football, or welcoming them back to their former home for a roast dinner.**

We have taken steps to formalise the support young people receive when they leave our care. Based on listening to young people involved in our Staying Close pilot, we have developed a guidance document for professionals working with a child in care or leaving care.

As Ben was getting ready to move on from his children’s home, his life skills worker introduced the idea of a Staying Close plan. They are co-developed with young people, and it is their choice whether they want a plan.

Ben thought about the people he felt were important to him and the ways he wanted them to support him when he moved out. So his plan was built to include visiting his old home once a week, being visited weekly by one of the home’s staff team, and a weekly life skills session. These are not set in stone, but are instead flexible agreements so that Ben can trial living independently when he is feeling confident but still access support when he is struggling.

Sticking to the plan is not always easy but Ben and our staff are open with each other about any challenges so that they can work together to find a solution.

**“I would not have settled in as quickly without Staying Close and I would have felt more isolated. It’s nice knowing I can call or text someone if I need to and having them visit me in my new home.”**

Ben, young person

Moving to independence throws up lots of new experiences for a young person. Thanks to St Christopher’s, Ben doesn’t have to do these things alone. He has someone there not to do things for him but to do them with him, just like any good parent would do.

Throughout 2020 we are embedding these guidelines across St Christopher’s and sharing them with the wider sector, so that we can make a difference to the **lifelong learning and thriving** of children and young people across the country.

Our Staying Close pilots would not have been possible without funding from the Department for Education, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, BBC Children in Need and LandAid. We are very grateful for their support in developing these projects.



“ St Christopher’s have changed young people’s lives for the better, given hope and focus and are enabling individuals who may well have been overlooked or disregarded to become valuable members of the community.”

Isle of Man JobCentre

## Raising career aspirations

**In 2019 we launched our *Support Into Employment* scheme on the Isle of Man, designed to give care leavers the skills and experiences to help them succeed in the world of work.**

Our staff work tirelessly to help care leavers access education and employment. However, St Christopher’s realised that the hard part was helping young people sustain these jobs, so we invested in a dedicated team to help.

Pushing care leavers into work before they are ready can knock their confidence – sometimes for years. Our team does not focus on trying to get everyone a job straight away, but helps young people to grow their talents, realise their ambitions and raise their aspirations.

They encourage young people to learn new skills and try out different work placements so that they can find the job that is right for them. Since launching we have helped young people complete 12 volunteer placements, 36 trial shifts and 7 work placements, which has led to **13 paid jobs**.

Jason had worked at a number of places, but he kept finding that his employers did not understand how his Asperger syndrome and ADHD impacted on him at work. He wanted a job with a set structure, where he could work alongside his manager to develop and learn.

Our Support Into Employment team spoke to Jason about the skills and experience he could offer. They set him up with a local recruitment agency so that he could have some additional support finding an employer who would appreciate his needs.

Then in the summer, Jason interviewed for a fixed term role working at the Isle of Man Festival of Motorcycling Manx Grand Prix. He was really excited when he was given the opportunity and gained lots of experience, particularly the skills needed to work with the public.

**“I received a lot of positive feedback from the public, my colleagues and management, which gave me a great confidence. I was pleased to hear from my manager that they were proud to have me as part of their team and I have also been invited back next year!”**

Jason, young person

Now that Jason’s confidence has grown, he is ready to find permanent work and put his new skills to use. Without help from our specialist team and from supportive island employers, young people like Jason would not have the opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling career.



**74%** of young people living with St Christopher's who are at risk of child criminal exploitation are reducing their risk with our support

## How a trusted adult makes all the difference



**In 2018 St Christopher's was awarded Home Office funding to pilot a project tackling Serious Youth Violence. Since then, our *Trusted Spaces* team has been working with Ealing Council to divert young people's lives from violence.**

Many young people do not have someone they can turn to. Trusted Spaces makes sure every young person has at least one trusted adult in their lives. Our outreach work in schools, youth clubs and the community educates young people on exploitation and grooming, backed up by our 24/7 helpline if they need to talk. We aim to reduce the likelihood of violence or crime by giving young people the confidence to assess their choices. Our service has a **74% engagement rate** with young people.

**"I can rely on them. I pick up the phone and whatever it is you can just deal with it."**

James, young person

When she was referred to our service, Yasmin was experimenting with drugs and at risk of sexual exploitation. Her social worker referred her due to worries about how she responded to peer pressure, which was putting her in dangerous situations.

Yasmin met with a Trusted Spaces worker every week, where they explored how she felt about her experiences

of substance misuse, healthy relationships and being in a gang. Together, Yasmin and her key worker thought about how young people and professionals view these issues.

This gave Yasmin a better understanding of where adults are coming from when they try to help her and gave them a starting point from where they could build a trusting relationship. Our worker wanted to help Yasmin manage life's situations and ask for support when she needed it, but also to take responsibility for her actions.

During one of their meetings, Yasmin said she had stopped smoking cannabis and no longer wanted to be near friends who smoke. Together with our worker she thought about what makes a good friend and a bad friend, which gave her the confidence to speak to her friends about how she was feeling and that she wanted them to support her decisions. She put boundaries in place about things she no longer wanted to do and ended some of her negative relationships.

If Trusted Spaces had not been there, Yasmin would have struggled to say no to her friends and the types of exploitation she experienced would have escalated. She is still learning a lot about herself, and we are guiding Yasmin to think about her future and how she can build positive relationships that will propel her to where she wants to be.





**We engaged 110  
young people with  
our Runaways service**

## Making the most of Return Home Interviews

**When a young person goes missing from home or care, they are offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) to find out more about why they ran away. Our model is flexible to what young people need, where they feel comfortable meeting and how they want to communicate. By respecting their views, our Runaways team build trusting relationships that help young people towards a brighter future.**

Jess met our Runaways team when she was 16 years old. She lived with a supported housing provider and the adults around her were worried about her misusing substances, going missing and associating with people who had a negative influence.

Jess engaged with our worker through text and phone calls, but found it difficult to commit to a face-to-face meeting. Then, the next time a referral for an RHI came through, our worker arranged to do it over the phone instead, which was more comfortable for Jess and helped her to recognise that her needs were central to our work.

After a few months, Jess went missing again. This time she wanted to chat to our worker in person. She was unhappy about how professionals had responded when she tried to talk to them about being the victim of a crime and wanted to speak to someone she trusted.

We helped Jess to reflect on what she could learn from past decisions before encouraging her to focus on the future. She shared her dream of working in beauty, so St Christopher's found employment support and accompanied her to a college so she could find the right training. Her worker applied to St Christopher's Diamond Fund to help Jess buy tools she needed to do the course. All of this helped to grow her confidence and think about what she could offer to a future employer.

Because Jess had built a relationship with our worker, she felt safe to open up about the route she wanted to take in life. With our perseverance and commitment, we were able to give her a leg up onto the career ladder so she can achieve her full potential.

**"Everyone from St Christopher's Runaways service has blown my mind with their commitment, creativity and enthusiasm towards making a difference in young people's experiences and journeys."**

Barnet Council, partner of our Runaways service

This year we are building on our work with Barnet Council on a new service for the younger siblings of children involved in the youth justice system. We are excited to develop support for this often overlooked group and make a difference to the lives of them and their families.



Wraparound supported **135** clients including young people, parents, adopters and foster carers

## Reconnecting families through therapy

**Our *Wraparound service* provides therapeutic support to children, young people, families and carers on the Isle of Man. The team are flexible to clients' needs, working with them individually or with their loved ones to assist them in building relationships that work for everyone involved.**

Ollie was living with his adoptive family when he started to experience high separation anxiety. He was pushing boundaries, being forgetful, struggling to cope with his emotions and lashing out at his parents.

Our Wraparound therapist suggested Theraplay, a strengths-based approach that helps children and parents practise the interactions that build a secure attachment. By creating space for fun, young people learn to trust in others and experience a positive relationship, which transforms their view of themselves into someone who is worthy and loveable. It also helps parents and carers attune to a young person's needs so they can respond with appropriate support.

The team wanted to address Ollie's refusal to go to school and give his parents the tools to encourage him whilst still setting firm boundaries. Wraparound worked directly with his school to enable staff to think about the reasons behind his behaviour. Together they developed ways of reducing

Ollie's anxiety about being away from his family and helping him to understand his routine.

Throughout this difficult period, Wraparound offered continuous support to Ollie's parents. They tried our therapeutic parenting techniques and were appreciative of the space to process their own feelings.

Over time, Ollie's parents were able to recognise his early warning signs of distress and proactively support him to regulate his emotions. Our Theraplay sessions are building the family's bond, with the parents providing structure and boundaries that Ollie is happy to follow. All three of them feel safe and comfortable around each other.

Wraparound has made such a difference on the Isle of Man that we are rolling out a sister service in the UK. Our psychotherapists will provide staff with facilitated reflective practice to improve their emotional resilience and increase their confidence of working in a therapeutically-informed way, which will give them tools to better support young people with complex needs.

**"Since I have been here I feel able to talk, like people care and are going to try and help me. And it does help."**

Usman, young person



**74%** of young people living with St Christopher's who are at risk of sexual exploitation are reducing their risk with our support

## Finding young people's place in the community

**Our Safe Steps children's home opened in 2015 with support from the Department for Education Innovation Programme. The home is designed to look after girls at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and other community threats.**

Unlike traditional CSE practice, our model keeps young girls within the community, rather than sending them far away to rural or secure care placements. We believe that moving young people out of their area does not remove the risk of exploitation but can instead exacerbate it; they are isolated, lonely and away from the positive relationships they may have in their local community. They become more likely to run away and vulnerable to negative influences.

**"You helped me realise that I could do something different. Yeah I did it, but I don't think I would have believed in myself if you hadn't just never given up and never stopped showing me opportunities."**

Becci, young person

Feeling accepted can have a positive impact on a young person's life, which is why we work hard to establish links

with local communities. This has helped us to find work experience, training and employment for young people in the home, so that they can feel settled and build a life for themselves.

**"Without your help I don't know where I would be. I was going to give up so many times and I remember how every time I said that you would just sit on the floor with me and make plans for what I needed to do. It stopped me feeling crushed by it all."**

Katy, young person

From these opportunities the young people developed life skills and experienced what it is like to take on responsibility. Their self-esteem has grown, which in turn has positively impacted on their overall wellbeing as they have engaged in the home's activities and support.

There has also been a reduction in the number of times the young people have gone missing because they feel more invested in their future. Thanks to positive relationships and feeling like they belong, the young people are keen to keep moving forward with their lives and achieve their dreams.



**93%** of children are very happy or happy living with our foster families

## Family doesn't end at 18 – so why should fostering?

Foster carers open their homes and hearts to young people who have been through all sorts of life experiences. Now, under **Staying Put**, young people can stay with their foster families past the age of 18 to stagger their transition to independence.

It can be hard to move in with a family who isn't your own, especially for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who may have lost touch with their own parents and siblings.

Ramee arrived in the UK when he was 16 years old after travelling halfway across the world to find safety from violence and war. After initially living in shared lodgings, he moved in with Abdul and Heena, two of our foster carers in the Midlands.

As an asylum seeker, Ramee had to attend Home Office interviews so that his application for leave to remain in the UK could be processed. This time was filled with uncertainty as he had to relive the challenging, scary experiences from his past. For many unaccompanied minors, trauma has impacted their memory and they cannot always remember exact sequences of events. Their explanations can also be lost in translation. Ramee firmly believed that returning to his country of origin would lead to him being killed.

**“You are so worried and anxious, you can't get on with anything. And you are waiting, you don't get told anything. It isn't easy.”**

Ramee, young person

Abdul and Heena wanted to make sure Ramee understood the leave to remain process, so they learnt more about it to answer his questions. He was struggling with nightmares about his past trauma, so the carers helped him to speak to his GP about his anxieties.

Finally, the news Ramee was waiting for arrived – he received indefinite leave to remain in the UK. He is studying at college and learning to drive, and still lives with Abdul and Heena now he is 18 under a Staying Put agreement. They see each other as family now and will be keeping in touch even after Ramee moves into his own home. One day, he hopes to be reunited with the family he had to leave behind, but for now he is excited to build a life for himself.

Sadly, Staying Put placements are not utilised that widely across the UK, even though we know the difference they can make to young people's lives. We would love to see more providers and local authorities commit to Staying Put models that work for the foster carers and the young person.



Young people  
achieved  
**422 AQAs**  
in the academic  
year 2018-19

## Learning is about more than exams

**Education gives young people access to opportunities they never imagined. At St Christopher's, we advocate for access to the learning that is right for each young person so we can equip them with the confidence to achieve their dreams.**

Our **See Yourself Succeed education team** on the Isle of Man are experts at engaging young people. They support them to achieve school and college qualifications, but they also grow their confidence so that they can go onto specialist learning for their chosen career.

**"I told you what my dream was and you didn't look at me not having any exams and say it wouldn't be possible. You came with me on the first day because I was nervous and you really helped me stick with it... doing that was what gave me the confidence to get a job."**

Billy, young person

Emily was living in our secure care home when she first started working with the Education team. At first she did not see the point of education, so our staff focussed on building up a relationship with Emily before launching into any schoolwork. The fear of making mistakes was her main barrier, but once she got to know the team she felt more comfortable to give it a try.

They started working at Emily's current level to boost her confidence. She moved onto Level 1 and 2 Functional Skills; completing these exams gave her a real confidence boost and made her consider all of the opportunities opened up by education. To help her further, the team supported her with her self-belief and assertiveness so that she would feel assured enough to go into the workplace.

At the same time, Emily was working on her skills in cooking and employability to develop her independence. She achieved 20 **AQAs**, which are recognised qualifications that can enhance a young person's CV by showing they can commit to a task. Across all St Christopher's services, young people achieved more than 200 cooking sessions, 50 employability sessions and 75 emotional or physical wellbeing sessions, amongst many other AQAs.

All of the team's work helped Emily to realise the potential she has to offer at a very important time in her life. The Education team's tenacity, persistence and unwillingness to give up shows the difference that can be made to a young person's life when someone believes in you and gives you space to grow. Throughout 2020 we are building up our Education team in the UK to help even more pupils re-engage with learning after an interruption and find places at appropriate provisions.



**131** young people benefitted from the Diamond Fund

## We're a charity – we don't make a profit

**As a charity, any additional funds we make are invested back into creating brighter futures for young people, whether this is through developing new services, improving their homes based on what they tell us, or training staff in areas of key expertise that will help young people to thrive.**

Support from our donors provides extra opportunities for our children and young people, like the **Diamond Fund**. This is a pot of money that all our children and young people can apply for. Last year 46% of applications were to support young people with education, training and employment, whilst 54% were for creative activities.

Laura had been excluded from school and was struggling with at-home tuition. She wanted to be a fashion designer, but she felt that nobody took her dream seriously, or that they only saw her school exclusion rather than her potential.

She told the team in her home what she wanted to do and they helped her to fill in a Diamond Fund application for a sewing machine and fabric so that she could develop her skills to get a place on her chosen college course. Knowing that the team took her goals seriously gave Laura the confidence to focus on her GCSEs, and

she worked hard to get the grades she needed to go to college.

When Laura started her Level 1 course in fashion designing, she needed to find funding for materials and studio rental. So the Diamond Fund came into use for the second time.

Since then Laura has achieved a merit in her first course and jumped straight to Level 3. Becoming a fashion designer is her passion, but her successes have also led her to think about other things she could do. She wants to set up her own children's home to offer the best care and support to young people – and it would of course have its very own Diamond Fund.

**“Getting the Diamond Fund helped me stay positive. I didn't have to find scraps of leftover material but could go to the fabric shop and get the items I wanted. I'm really proud of what I have done.”**

Laura, young person

Without the Diamond Fund, Laura would not have been able to build up the confidence to be in the classroom by learning new skills, let alone have achieved as much as she has. We are so excited to see what she does next!

# Meet our leadership



**Jonathan Whalley**  
Chief Executive



**Bert O'Donoghue**  
Chair of St Christopher's  
Council



**Jane Poole-Wilson**  
Chair of St Christopher's  
Isle of Man Council

**St Christopher's leadership is responsible for ensuring we achieve our strategic aim of creating brighter futures for children and young people. Jonathan Whalley joined the organisation as Chief Executive in October 2018. Bert O'Donoghue is Chair of our Council, whilst Jane Poole-Wilson is Chair of our Isle of Man Council.**

**Two of our young people, Shenice and Marie, grilled them on what they have enjoyed the most about being part of St Christopher's and their plans for the future.**

## **What have you learned this year?**

**JW:** The most significant thing I have learned is that St Christopher's is an organisation that lives its values. I remember when I first started I could see people not just saying they do it but really doing it.

**BO:** I have learned what great people work at St Christopher's. They are people who don't do it for the money. It is not easy work, they deal with difficult situations and they do it because they really care and want to make a difference in young people's lives. And I think that was something I already knew but it has been really emphasised for me in my new role this year.

**JPW:** We are learning about the best ways that we can go above and beyond the things we are already contracted to do. We have to balance the endless list of

things we could do with what will make a real difference to people's lives.

## **What are you most proud of at St Christopher's this year?**

**JW:** I visited one of our children's homes and met a young person who had been living there for three months. And before that she had been bounced around between lots of different homes. Her behaviour was not great but people didn't understand the challenges she faced. Three months is her longest placement yet, and this really illustrated what I am proud of – that we don't give up on our young people.

**BO:** For me it is the way we give young people a voice. I am really proud of the way that St Christopher's manages to keep young people at the heart of what they do in the small things, right through to bigger organisational stuff like this impact report and interview now.

**JPW:** The staff driving the Support Into Employment project have done brilliantly to engage and inspire employers and the Isle of Man community.

## **How does St Christopher's 150 year history impact the charity today?**

**BO:** St Christopher's has worked with lots of people and transformed many lives. We have a tremendous amount of heritage, which reminds us that we have to be flexible. If we keep doing what we did 150 years ago we won't

meet young people's needs because life has evolved to bring us new challenges, so we need to do something to respond to that. I am filled with a lot of pride at being part of an organisation that has been going for so long – we must be doing something right.

**JW:** 150 years really emphasises to me the importance of staying close. Our commitment to young people is not just for now, it is into the future. We want to be an organisation that is still there for you, after you leave one of our homes; if you need some support or just want to come back to where you lived then we want be there for you.

## **What are your plans for the coming year?**

**JW:** In the next 12 months there are a range of goals: retain our existing contracts, define what makes us unique, improve our IT support across the organisation, and introduce therapy in all of our homes. We want all of our homes and services to have great reputations, where social workers want their young people to live and the young people feel happy and safe living there.

**JPW:** We are hopeful that St Christopher's Isle of Man will retain the contract to continue to provide services for young people. I also want to see some of the things that have come out of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People really gain traction to see changes for care leavers.

## **If you could give your 16 year old self advice, what would it be?**

**BO:** I was lucky enough to grow up in a home with two parents, so I think I would tell my younger self to appreciate what I had more. I look back now and I think I took that for granted. And of course – study harder, go to the dentist more regularly and get a haircut!

## **What are the biggest challenges for children in care today?**

**JPW:** The sense of being cut off at a certain age needs to change. This doesn't happen to children growing up with their family, so we need to work hard to give our young people the support that they need, regardless of age.

## **What is your favourite thing about St Christopher's?**

**JPW:** The way we put young people first.

**JW:** Knowing that we make a difference.

**BO:** I love when I visit homes to meet staff and young people. It is a privilege to hear their stories and see them grow.

**Shenice**

**Marie**

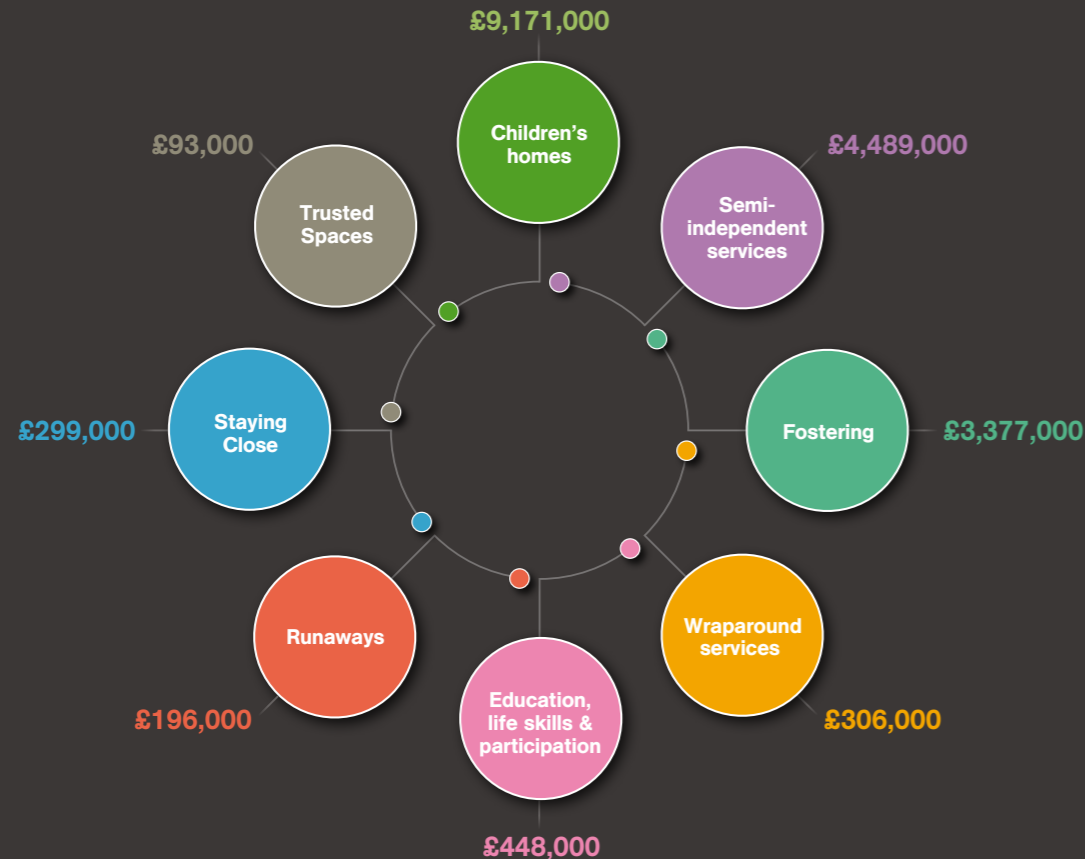
## Finances

Last year we spent just under

# £18,000,000

supporting children and young people

The main areas of expenditure were:



We spent **£261,000** training staff

## Thank you to everyone who supports St Christopher's

As you have seen in this report, the work we do is only possible because of the support we receive from funders, organisations and individuals. Some of the added extras we are able to offer as a charity can make a huge difference to the way children and young people feel. From the largest contract through to smaller donations and gifts, each plays a vital part in ensuring children and young people at St Christopher's have brighter futures.

Thank you to every one of our supporters and here's to the next 150 years!

- Achieving for Children
- Ambitions Employment Agency
- Barclays
- BBC Children in Need
- Beach Buddies
- Birmingham Children's Trust
- Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies, Middlesex University
- Christchurch Laxey (Lonan Church)
- Cyclewise
- Department for Education
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Fairer Fostering Partnership
- Fowler Smith and Jones Trust
- G D Herbert Charitable Trust
- Graih
- Hartford Homes
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Hickinbothams
- Home Office
- Housing Matters
- Isle of Man Constabulary
- Isle of Man Drug and Alcohol Team
- Isle of Man Foodbank
- Isle of Man Government
- Isle of Man Steam Packet Company
- Isle Learn
- JLT Management Services
- King William's College, Isle of Man
- LandAid Charitable Trust
- Little Lives UK
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- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Lewisham
- London Borough of Wandsworth
- London Borough of Westminster
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- MAC-UK
- Mageni Trust
- MannVend
- Oak Foundation
- Parville Estate
- Peacock Charitable Trust
- Phoenix Windows
- Recruitment Works
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Sandwell Children's Trust
- Scotiabank
- Simply Secure Group
- Sir Jeremiah Colman Gift Trust
- Sisters of the Holy Cross Charitable Trust
- Sleepwell Hotels
- Social Pedagogy Professional Association
- Souter Charitable Trust
- Spot On Cleaners
- Strand
- Tel's Ltd
- ThemPra Social Pedagogy
- Utmost Wealth
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- West London Alliance
- Youth Endowment Fund



# StCHRISTOPHER'S CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES



*"We say it's okay"*

This report has been approved by St Christopher's young people.

Looking for a placement or want to know more about the way we work?  
Contact us today:



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St Christopher's Fellowship



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**Caring for children and young people since 1870**  
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Registered Charity No. 207782 in England and Wales and 927 in the Isle of Man.  
Homes and Communities Agency No. LH1832