

**St**CHRISTOPHER'S  
CREATING BRIGHTER  
FUTURES



**impact  
report  
2021**



We worked with  
**1,854**  
children and  
young people  
in 2019-20

On occasions the photographs in this report do not match the stories. The stories are all real but names have been changed.

# Welcome to St Christopher's Impact Report 2021

**I live in a St Christopher's semi-independent home. They are a charity with more than 150 years' experience helping young people to reach their full potential, through providing children's homes, semi-independent homes, foster families and therapeutic and educational support across the UK and Isle of Man.**

This year every single person has had to find ways to overcome the challenges that the pandemic has thrown our way. The pandemic makes us forget the possibilities that once existed in the world, all the things that made our hearts beat with adrenalin and eyes water with exhilaration.

To make it through 2020, we have all had to dig deep and find something that you hear a lot about when you grow up in care – **resilience**. This is something we instinctively have as humans. It is vulnerability but it is also power. We tend to underestimate its importance when needed most, because we settle into the arms of routine. Resilience teaches us to overcome failure and most importantly allows us to adapt to new environments, no matter how challenging. It is the very core of what makes us who we are and the decisions we make.

An example of this resilience is living in a semi-independent home during the coronavirus pandemic and feeling its impact on many levels, including on those around me. It

separated us and changed life as we know it on a massive scale, then brought us back together in an unnatural, awkward sort of way, leaving many people feeling uprooted and confused.

Most people aren't sure what it's like to live in a place like St Christopher's until they've experienced it. My advice would be to take it for what it is – a stepping stone. Before you know it you have developed skills that you can use to your advantage and take anywhere at any time. These can help you become what you want to be.

Persevering through COVID-19 is only a small droplet in the ocean of what makes St Christopher's the most resilient place I've experienced so far. From new arrivals and finances, to school, college and jobs, it has definitely been eye-opening when it comes to independence and finding my own two feet. Throughout my time here I have grown up in a way where I am now able to find the drive and passion to do what I find interesting and beneficial to my life.

But the one thing that outplays everything is to be as resilient as you possibly can, when it comes to choices, struggles, cooking meals and being hopeful for the future. It's the one tool we all need to get through life.

*Yasmine*

# Our vision, strategy and a strange birthday year

We started 2020 with plans to celebrate our 150th birthday, bringing together people connected to St Christopher's now and in the past. As with many things in life this year, our plans were put to one side but we can't wait to hold these celebrations in-person once it is safe to do so.

This year we have been thinking a lot about **resilience**. In our long history we have seen the needs of children, young people and families change and have adapted our work to ensure the care and support we provide remains relevant and valuable. 2020 was no different, with all of our teams adjusting their practice to prioritise safety and relationships. We are so proud of how our staff and foster carers adapted during these unprecedented times, so a big thank you to all of them.

Despite the pandemic, we are still achieving our strategic goals by opening more homes, developing our therapeutic support and enabling more young people to thrive through expanded education and employment skills services. We are aiming to create brighter futures for **double the number of children and young people by 2023**.

## 01

### More excellent homes, fostering and support

- Our **Hub and Spoke model** for residential children's care opened in the West Midlands, made up of a four-bed home with one-bed homes nearby and further solo homes under refurbishment. We are proud to have been opening new homes and continuing this service during the pandemic, offering stability and consistent relationships to young people by enabling them to move between homes in the model with the same staff members in a community they already know.
- We have renewed our contract with the Isle of Man Government. Our residential teams have adapted their homes and practice in response to changing need on the island, including opening Dreem Ard children's home at the start of lockdown and ensuring the move was safe for all.
- In partnership with Barnet Council and the Youth Endowment Fund we launched a **Young Siblings Mentoring Project** to support young people aged 10-14 who have an older sibling known to the criminal justice system. We provide role models who help young people feel good about themselves and their options for the future, giving them the confidence to work towards their goals.

## 02

### Improve emotional wellbeing

- In both the Isle of Man and UK, our therapeutic teams adapted to the changing needs of young people, foster carers and staff to offer direct wellbeing support.
- The teams have also developed therapeutic interventions that can be used by all staff to build confidence and community within our services. They can be easily embedded across service streams to ensure young people are happy in their homes and have positively-framed relationships with staff.
- Our **therapeutic support** service in the UK embedded their offer across St Christopher's children's homes, providing weekly sessions to staff teams. This model promotes positive wellbeing for staff and encourages therapeutically-informed practice for working with young people, whilst aligning with our strengths-based approach to care.
- Using expertise from our outreach teams working to tackle Serious Youth Violence, we responded to the Home Office consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence.

## 03

### Promote lifelong learning and thriving

- We successfully piloted **learning support** for young people who are disengaged with education or awaiting a school place. This came into its own during lockdown, enabling young people to sustain their learning despite schools being closed. Additional support from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust helped us buy laptops so young people could do schoolwork but also stay connected with the important people in their lives.
- The Department for Education is funding an expansion of our **Staying Close** project, which supports care leavers as they transition from residential care to independence. This includes hiring care-experienced young people as peer researcher apprentices so they can evaluate the project's impact.
- Care-experienced young people on the Isle of Man, including care leavers supported by our Aftercare service, took part in an art exhibition to **challenge perceptions of the care system**.
- We are purchasing accommodation in the community for Isle of Man care leavers to ensure they have safe places to live and appropriate support.



**“Children have developed trusted and secure relationships with staff. Staff know the children well, listen to them and invest in them. One child told the inspector, ‘Staff are like family and they really go out of their way to help me.’ This kind of respect and nurturing gives children a sense of belonging.”**

Ofsted inspection report

## Changing the face of residential care

**St Christopher’s is an experienced provider of children’s homes for young people in care, both in England and the Isle of Man. We constantly learn from young people’s experiences and expertise to provide the best care.**

**“It has been a breath of fresh air and I would happily recommend this home to anyone. It had a lovely vibe when I first arrived with my young person and has never lost it.”**

Social worker

This past year we have launched our **Hub and Spoke model** of residential care in the West Midlands. Our model is built around four-bed ‘Hub’ children’s homes, with one-bed ‘Spoke’ children’s homes nearby in the same community. We also have many caring, loving foster families in the same area, which offers another pathway that can ease young people back into living in a family environment.

The model has three key benefits for young people:

1. Staff members they know and trust can move between the homes with them, maintaining those important relationships.
2. Support can be increased or decreased in line with a young person’s individual needs at that time.

3. They can stay living in their local community with links to their family, friends, school and other essential contacts.

In our Spoke homes, young people benefit from more one-to-one quality time with staff. Shift patterns in smaller homes mean young people get to spend the whole day with staff, which develops stronger relationships. As it is a solo placement, the dynamic is more relaxed and there is less opportunity for young people to be swayed by peer pressure within the home.

This also means there is more flexibility for change and adapting the home’s care, support and environment to suit a young person’s individual needs. Young people feel more comfortable approaching staff with their feelings and sharing what we can do to make a positive difference in their daily lives. Tailoring our care and support means we can bring out their inner diamond, grow their self-confidence and help them to enjoy happy childhoods.

**“One child has expressed her ambition to become a residential support worker and to encourage her ambition she gives a daily handover to staff. This was lovely to observe during the inspection. Such opportunities make children feel valued and build their self-esteem.”**

Ofsted inspection report



**96%** of our fostering placement endings in 2019-20 were planned\*

Young people live with our foster families for an average of **1099** days, which is just over 3 years\*\*

\*Compared to national average of 93% \*\*Compared to national average of 379 days

## Fostering to adopt: finding a forever home

**As a charity, we always prioritise young people's needs. We plan appropriate transitions for young people in line with what best suits their needs so that they can achieve a positive outcome, such as moving on to independence, returning to their biological family or finding permanence with a foster family.**

Our foster families are based in Cambridgeshire, Essex, London, Peterborough and the West Midlands. They are experienced in caring for young people of all ages and backgrounds. One thing that unites all of our foster families is their passion for and commitment to what they do.

Before coming into care, Elliott had experienced trauma, which St Christopher's and his foster carer wanted to help him with. He felt responsible for everything that had happened to him and struggled to have a healthy relationship with his siblings, so was placed with a different foster family. Elliott blamed himself for their separation, even though he was only seven years old.

Then Elliott moved in with his foster carer, Louisa, as a long-term foster placement with a view to adoption by

his carer. Louisa began a programme of work to help Elliott relinquish the responsibility he felt towards his siblings and focus on enjoying his own childhood.

Elliott's challenging behaviour was a way for him to act out his guilt. Over the next five years, Louisa supported him to participate in therapeutic intervention and attended specialist training to develop her understanding of trauma and its effects on the developing brain. All of this was in addition to the love and care she provided every day.

Louisa wanted to make sure Elliott felt fully safe and secure in his home, so with our support she applied to adopt him. She was deeply committed to Elliott, even taking early retirement from her career in a special needs school, and never wavered in her belief that he needed someone to love and care for him unconditionally. Her resilience helped Elliott to build his self-confidence and self-belief.

The support and guidance Louisa and Elliott received from St Christopher's and other services enabled them to move forward with the adoption. Their journey is by no means complete but we are so proud of this family.



**Children's homes in our Staying Close model were in contact with 95% of young people six months after they moved out**

## Expanding our Staying Close model

**St Christopher's *Staying Close* revolves around ensuring young people can maintain relationships with staff from their children's homes as they move towards greater independence.**

Since 2018 we have been piloting this model in London but this year we received funding from the Department for Education to expand our model across our UK homes. This expansion allows young people to benefit from increased life skills support. It also means young people have more power over their own transition plan, which is co-produced between themselves and professionals they are supported by.

Staying Close plans have been rolled out across St Christopher's. Young people choose whether to have a Staying Close plan and always have the option to change their mind at a future point. **79% of young people who were offered a Staying Close plan accepted.**

One common request from young people transitioning to independence is whether they can visit their new home in advance of the move, as sometimes this is not taken into account. Our Staying Close model allows young people to go one better, giving them the opportunity to have weekend stays in their new home so they can build a fuller understanding of independent living whilst being supported by a caregiver they know.

James had been living in his children's home for a year when a plan was made for him to move into a semi-independent home. He had made significant progress in his time at the home, particularly in building relationships with staff, so he was able to explain how he wanted a gradual move to independence instead.

With guidance from the Staying Close team, staff in James' home advocated for him to stay in his home whilst a Staying Close plan and transition preparation was put in place. James then worked with the teams to create a plan that would support his transition.

The commitment from the team helped James to trust that his bonds with staff were real and to believe that they would still be there for him even after he moved on to independence. He is now preparing for his future with the backing of people who genuinely care about him.

**"Through the Staying Close framework, staff have been able to formalise, and allow for relationships between themselves and the young people leaving care, to develop as normal adult relationships would outside of the care system."**

Department for Education evaluation report

# Therapeutic input in children's social care

**Claire runs our Wraparound therapeutic team on the Isle of Man, whilst Rhiannon has developed our newer therapeutic service in the UK. Here they discuss our pioneering models, how resilience can sometimes hold us back and their work towards improved emotional wellbeing for young people and our workforce.**

**C:** We use a developmental trauma-informed approach to enable greater understanding of how mental health conditions are reflected in behaviours. We've been working with an array of children, young people and families on the island, as well as offering consultations to carers and professionals. During lockdown, our team quickly diversified the service and implemented creative ways of working with clients to meet their needs. It was an interesting adjustment, moving from our usual approach of face-to-face therapy but has prompted opportunities to reflect on our offer.

**R:** Agreed, our therapists were keen to resume working in children's homes as soon as possible once restrictions were lifted. **Regular therapeutic support has been rolled out to all of our UK children's and semi-independent homes.** Therapy is often about what people are not saying as much as what they do say, which you can't always pick up over video. But it did allow

us to keep providing support throughout lockdown and continuing weekly reflective practice with staff teams.

**C:** Incorporating phone and video calls has increased our flexibility and responsiveness as people recognise it as a viable option now. It means we can be more accessible.

**R:** In the UK we've been rolling out Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) this year – all of our children's home staff have received the training. The model focuses on how young people are functioning in three areas (home, education and work, and peer-to-peer relationships). This is conducted monthly as part of staff team meetings, with one of our therapists in attendance. It provides a baseline to identify psycho-social wellbeing problems that staff can think creatively together to solve.

**C:** This is an interesting concept; it's important to be curious about resilience and look at it in context for each individual young person. Some young people we work with can actually be too resilient as a result of coping mechanisms they have developed through their past experiences.

**R:** Therapy can develop healthy levels of resilience. It equips us to be realistic with ourselves and others and to notice when things affect us. With our help, people are able to

adapt to their circumstances instead of using ways of coping from their old environments that may be unhelpful.

**C:** The aim of therapy is to equip children and young people with healthy coping strategies and the resilience to maintain their mental health. We work in partnership with everyone around a young person to understand the key relationships in their life and build authentic relationship by attuning to their emotions.

**R:** That applies to everyone, not just young people. Our team aims to reduce the risk of burnout and fatigue within residential children's home staff, so that we can help staff to perform well in their job and maintain positive relationships with young people.

**C:** During lockdown, our therapists were in weekly contact with Isle of Man homes and services to support both staff and young people. Staff can also access independent therapeutic support if they feel they need it.

**R:** Yes, we saw an initial increase of staff seeking therapeutic support at the start of lockdown in the UK. Staff were so committed to coming to work to look after St Christopher's young people but were understandably worried about the pandemic. However, it's not about seeing people as

struggling – we are all resourceful and capable. Therapy can provide the tools so people can see what's happening for them and what they can do about it.

**C:** That's how the new Safe Homes model will work too, which is going to be implemented across all of St Christopher's, starting in 2021. This is one of the first instances where it will be used in a non-clinical setting like children's homes. It will enable a whole team approach around a child.

**R:** We've used the Safe Homes model to develop an incident analysis tool that can be used by our residential staff when it feels like there has been conflict or harm for a young person. The tool aids staff to consider the different elements in play that contributed to an incident. We can learn from what happened and identify opportunities to prevent future incidents. It's a move away from blame to looking at small changes with long-term positive impact.

**C:** I can't wait to use Safe Homes on the Isle of Man. Other opportunities for us include possibly developing a model for working with children on the edge of care. Currently we follow a planned approach to therapy rather than crisis response, so we are coming up with ways that we can reactively support young people as their circumstances change. I'm excited about what this could look like.



**Young people attended  
514 support sessions  
with Support Into Employment  
over the course of the year**

# Giving care leavers a leg up on the career ladder

Care leavers are often expected to forgo their career dreams in favour of any job that will support them to live independently, even though they are in this situation through no fault of their own.

**Support Into Employment** is our fundraised service on the Isle of Man helping young care leavers step onto the career ladder and work towards achieving their long-term goals.



**Kerensa** was working in a restaurant when the coronavirus pandemic hit and was unfortunately laid off. She was worried about managing rent and bills and finding a new job.

sector re-opened. Kerensa stayed in touch regularly to maintain her relationship with her former workplace and offered to help with their new takeaway service.

The team at St Christopher's helped Kerensa to identify which benefit payments would work best for her situation. They also offered guidance on how to keep herself on the employer's radar, ready for when the

Thanks to the team's advice and Kerensa's resilience, perseverance and positive attitude, she was taken back on in a full-time role once the Isle of Man resumed normal business. She has continued to prosper and has an exciting career ahead of her.



**Euan** is a non-Manx resident and estranged student, who has been living on the Isle of Man for less than a year. St Christopher's is his only support network.

he needed to do to live happily on the island. The team helped him find a part-time job and enrol in college, which is furthering his learning and development.

Support Into Employment used their contacts at the JobCentre, Social Security Office, University College Isle of Man, social services and local employers to help Euan. Because of his current residency status, Euan needs to finish college and obtain employment to live on the island.

Now the team is supporting Euan to complete college, find full-time employment in the hospitality industry and deal with any challenges that come his way. They are so proud of his resilience and determination to succeed.

During lockdown, the team provided support through telephone and video calls, helping him to figure out what

**"I am so appreciative of St Christopher's and Support Into Employment. Without them I wouldn't have got a college place and a job."**

Euan, young person





**53%** of young people in our residential homes achieved at least 5 GCSEs graded 4-9 or A\*-C in 2020\*

\* Compared to national average of 13% for looked after children and 58% for all children (data from 2016)

## Educational support

One of St Christopher's strategic aims is to **promote lifelong learning and thriving** for children and young people. Education plays a key role in improving social mobility and future life chances, so we want to ensure children in care have the same opportunities as their peers who live with their families.

We provide **educational outreach support** in the Isle of Man and UK to young people living in our homes. Our teams offer a tailored service to meet young people's individual needs; they can bridge the gap whilst young people are experiencing breaks in their education and can help care leavers gain qualifications they missed out on at school.

Daisy lived in a St Christopher's children's home and attended specialist education provision. A diagnostic assessment revealed that she had learning needs and a lower reading age than her actual age. On hearing this, Daisy refused to attend the provision anymore as the assessment had knocked her self-confidence.

A teacher from our educational support service stepped in to keep Daisy engaged with learning at her own pace. After building a relationship to show Daisy she could trust her new teacher, she agreed to complete a financial course that was available online 24/7, so she could participate

at any time. This reduced pressure on Daisy, allowed her to practise self-motivation and independent study and enabled her to focus on enjoying the process of learning.

Along with regular scheduled catch-ups with her teacher and learning activities with staff in her home, Daisy could track her success and use a learning format optimised to suit her needs.

Although Daisy has moved on from her St Christopher's children's home, she has continued to work with our educational support service. Her local authority has appreciated the service provided by St Christopher's to increase Daisy's educational engagement and she continues to rediscover the joy of learning.

**"Timing is essential to access good quality learning moments with young people in care. Daisy's engagement in learning has been ignited and she achieved 81% attendance for our sessions. She is now well on the way to gaining a formal qualification, which I hope will give her the confidence and skills to achieve her future aspirations."**

Beverley, Teacher

# Putting young people on positive paths

**Our London-based community outreach teams quickly adapted their practice this year to follow social distancing and keep young people, their families and each other safe.**

## Trusted Spaces



**Through Home Office funding, we piloted a two-year community-based model to keep young people safe from Serious Youth Violence, gang involvement and criminal exploitation. Our Trusted Spaces model prioritises the need for young people to have trusted relationships with at least one adult in their lives so that they have somewhere safe to turn in challenging times, instead of being drawn to risky situations.**

### Coronavirus response

In lockdown, our Trusted Spaces team adapted their service to target support for local families.

This included:

- Working in the community to help young people understand the risks and advise them about government guidelines
- Maintaining relationships virtually with young

people and delivering sessions aimed at starting honest conversations, such as online cooking challenges and music sessions

- Delivering food to vulnerable families from the temporary foodbank
- Providing doorstep visits to in need families and supporting the social care and youth justice teams with health and wellbeing checks for young people
- Conducting contextual safeguarding assessments for schools.

## Runaways Service

**Our Runaways Service invests in building relationships with young people so that they can contact us in times of crisis. Getting to know them properly means we can guide young people to make appropriate decisions, complete Return Home Interviews and play a key role in contextual safeguarding.**

### Cameron's story

Cameron phoned our worker in a distressed state after arguing with his friend and being left alone in an unfamiliar city. He kept asking our worker why bad things happen to him.

Our worker used knowledge of Cameron's pre-existing mental health needs to direct him to a safe place in some hospital gardens. This meant there would be professional staff nearby in case Cameron needed assistance.

Cameron and his worker took some time to discuss the dynamic of his relationship with his friend who he originally came to see. Because Cameron trusted our worker enough to contact him, we were able to help before he was exposed to extra risk or pressured into activities with his friend.

## Young Siblings Mentoring Project

**In early 2020 we launched a service in partnership with Barnet Council to mentor young people aged 10-14 with an older sibling known to the criminal justice system. Previously this group has missed out on support.**

The team regularly video called young people and were available for parents to speak with during lockdown. They focused on helping young people to reduce anxiety through mindfulness, talking about their future plans and sharing ideas for self-care.

A key element of the team's practice is diverting young people towards more positive influences. They suggested activities to try, buying items such as a boxing bag and photograph printer. Having this time to learn new skills and consider what they wanted to achieve in life offered a great opportunity for young people to identify their aspirations and how to get there, with help from St Christopher's.

### Jermaine's story

Jermaine was working well with the team but found it hard to stay in touch during lockdown. His parents struggled to guide his behaviour and he kept going missing.

Our team did not give up on Jermaine, leaving regular messages to show they were there for him whenever he was ready. After a few weeks Jermaine started to reply, so our worker focussed on having fun by playing games together on video calls. These calls generated informal opportunities to discuss personal safety and potential risks.

They spent their last mentoring session celebrating how far Jermaine had come. Without the team's persistence, Jermaine would have continued to be at risk of exploitation. Now his confidence has grown and he is planning what he wants to achieve in life.



**86%** of our young people move onto positive destinations, which are less support intensive or allow for greater independence

## Community support for care leavers

**In 2020 the pandemic caused many people to feel lonely. Sadly, this is a familiar feeling for many care leavers, who have told us they struggle with feeling isolated after they move to independent living.**

When Shane lived at one of our semi-independent homes, he worked with staff to learn the skills he needed for leaving care. He was excited to move into his own training flat at the end of 2019 as part of our **START Project**, providing outreach support to young people who are living independently for the first time.

In-person outreach visits had to stop during lockdown, but our worker maintained regular contact over the phone to check how Shane was coping. He showed impressive resilience in adapting to the new way of life with less one-to-one support, successfully managing to maintain his tenancy, pay bills and show he can live independently.

**“Showing resilience is something that I’ve done my whole life and I’ve had to adapt quickly... I have come out of the other side of this pandemic becoming more independent, more focussed and more motivated to find opportunities to better my life in the future.”**

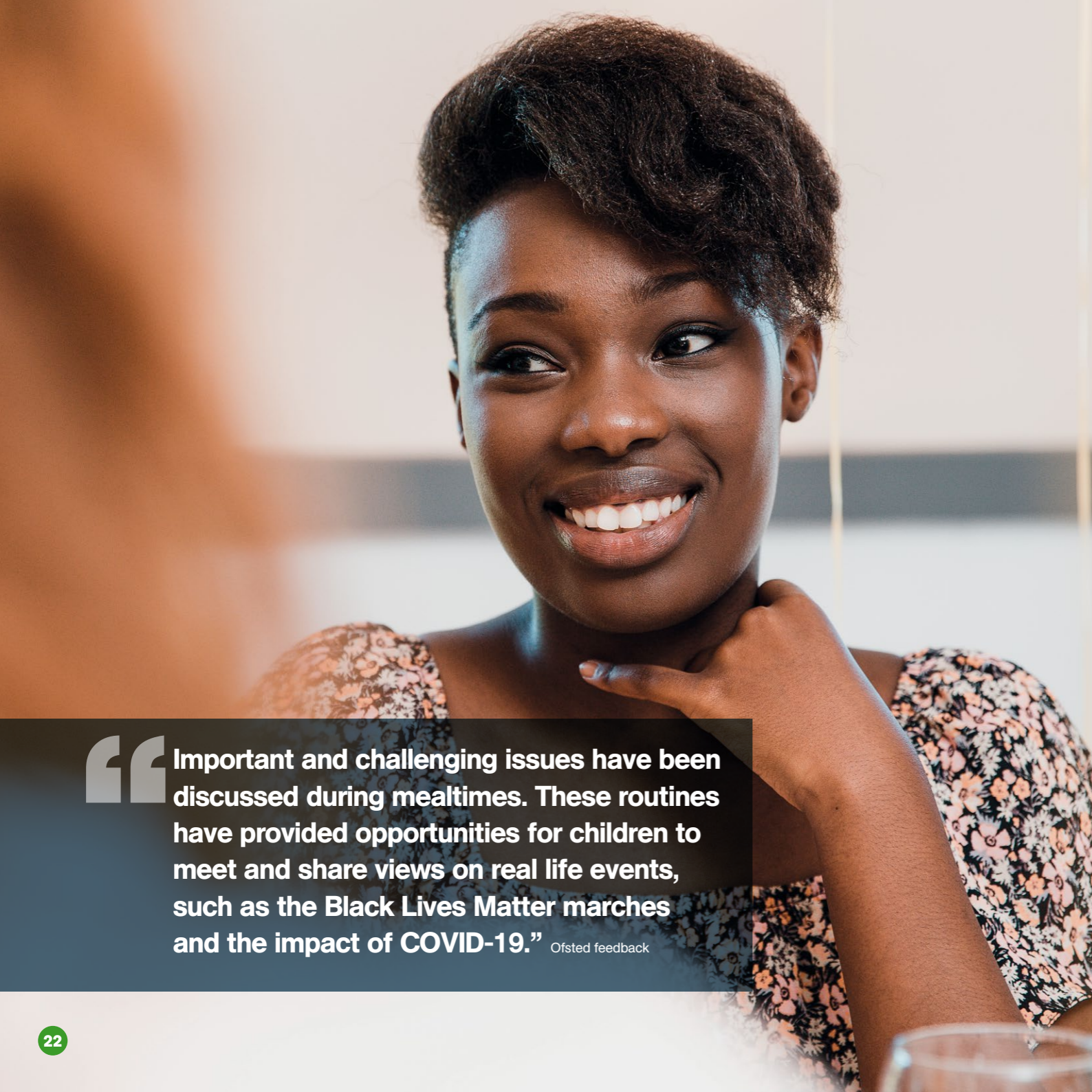
Shane, young person

Our **Aftercare** team on the Isle of Man work with care leavers in the community and at their drop-in centre. To maintain a service during the pandemic they worked on rotation to keep in touch with young people over the phone or by playing online games and quizzes.

It became essential to help young people with access to food as they were struggling with finances or with nobody else to ask for help during self-isolation. The team provided food parcel drops, shopping on behalf of young mothers, delivering hot meals with help from a member of the community and gaining access to the Isle of Man Foodbank in emergencies.

Another key part of their service was ensuring young people’s finances were stable, particularly for those who were unable to work during the pandemic. They liaised with Manx Telecom to secure free phone credit to reduce feelings of isolation and arranged a deal with a local hotel to provide rooms if young people became homeless or needed to self-isolate.

We are so grateful for the support of the Isle of Man Government this year, particularly for their practical support during the peaks of coronavirus by offering PPE and emergency staffing for our homes. This partnership approach helped to carry on creating brighter futures for young people.



“Important and challenging issues have been discussed during mealtimes. These routines have provided opportunities for children to meet and share views on real life events, such as the Black Lives Matter marches and the impact of COVID-19.” Ofsted feedback

# Making St Christopher's a great place to work

**The Black Lives Matter movement reignited discussion on structural racism, bias and discrimination in society.**

Our charity's values define who we are and lead us in our actions. We care for young people from a wealth of backgrounds and encourage them to aspire to be what they want to be, so it is important they have examples of success in their lives that represent people from all ethnicities and backgrounds.

St Christopher's is committed to being a just and equal organisation for young people, staff and foster carers. The movement sparked discussion and debate across our homes and services, reflecting how important it is for the people that make up our charity.

The first step is acknowledging that our organisation is not immune to these issues. Black, Asian, Mixed and Multi-Ethnic Groups are underrepresented within the charity sector, particularly in senior roles.

Race is still uncomfortable and often unaddressed in our society. Inequality has been amplified by Black Lives Matter, the murder of George Floyd and the pandemic. We are bringing race up the agenda so we can make change.

St Christopher's has set priorities and takes accountability for change. We are collecting and analysing data to inform our actions and question our practices. This change process is a marathon, not a sprint, and we want to make sure we get it right for everyone in our organisation.

We also established the **Race Matters Group** made up of colleagues from across the organisation to explore where we can improve equality within our organisation. Our initial focus is on five key areas:

- Leadership
- Training and education
- Data and experience
- Policies and procedures
- Specialist wellbeing and therapeutic support

The group discusses and debates issues like appropriate language and the accessibility of wellbeing initiatives. They then recommend changes to leadership that help achieve our goals.

**“Thank you to our colleagues for establishing this group and being so open about their experiences. This work will not be easy or a quick fix, but is hugely important in ensuring all St Christopher's staff and young people feel valued and equal.”**

Jonathan Whalley, Chief Executive

# 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

**Our leadership team ensures St Christopher's is on target to create brighter futures for children and young people. They were interviewed by three young people, Dominique, Louisa and Leah, about the surprises of the last year and plans for our charity's future.**

**C: 2020 has been full of unexpected events. What have you learnt?**

**JPW:** It's amazing how well people rise to the most difficult of challenges. I learnt that we take it for granted how to stay in touch with people – some care leavers didn't have the technology to support that during lockdown.

**JW:** I have learnt that there is great commitment and passion at St Christopher's. Our staff and foster carers have shown how much they care, treating children and young people as an extension of their own family. I have deep respect for everyone being a carer and working in our services.

**BO:** I learnt we have a really resilient group of people at St Christopher's who want to make sure they are doing the right thing all the time.

**Le: Lockdown really pushed and tested me. How do you help children and young people deal with challenges?**

**JW:** Every young person is unique, their challenges are their own so not every approach will be the same. But our overall approach is that we think the best way to help young people is through relationships that are meaningful and lasting.

**Le:** Yeah, I think that is true. It needs to be different for everyone.

**BO:** One of the things we can help is to recruit the right people. We try and find the right kind of people. People who are open to listening and who care about the job that they do.

**JPW:** In lockdown, children in our residential homes had the opportunity to do more activities with staff as they were all in the home together more often. It's strengthened their relationships and provided some fun during a difficult time.

**Le: But I'm wondering how do you know that you are getting it right? How do you really know what it is like for young people like me?**

**BO:** That is a hard and great question. The truth is, I don't know and we don't get it right all the time. But we try to have homes that are not about us telling you what we want you to do but listening to what you want to do.

**JW:** The danger is we assume we know what it is like for children and young people when we don't so we create spaces for them to share their views and be involved.

**JPW:** Part of this is that staff do whatever is needed of them, which is something they did even before the pandemic. We are willing to try different things if young people need extra help.

**Le: Thinking about the future, St Christopher's has some goals they want to achieve by 2023. How are you getting on with these?**

**JPW:** The main goal is to help more young people have brighter futures, no matter what is going on. We need to give

as many young people as possible a good experience to feel happy and confident and in control of their lives.

**JW:** I was worried with the pandemic that we might not make too much progress with our plans. But I met recently with all of our home and service managers and everyone has managed to achieve so much. We are going to keep doing what we do, do it better and focus on quality.

**Le: OK, what do you think will be your focus for the next year?**

**BO:** We want to grow slowly but surely because we think that we can bring our good work to more children and young people.

**JPW:** I agree, we want to do everything really well. We want to keep fundraising for our Support Into Employment programme as it very helpful to young people.

**D:** I've benefited a lot from St Christopher's with positive progression and with employment support.

**JW:** It might be that there are things caused by the pandemic that mean we can step in and support people like local authorities to adapt and do things differently.

**Le: The pandemic has highlighted inequality. What should be different for children in care and care leavers?**

**JW:** 30 years ago I started a career in social work and the fundamental things that need to be improved have not changed. Young people still need to have support at that

transition into full independence. We want young people to be able to come back to us during this time.

**Le:** I get that. I am actually moving out in a few days and I have already said that I want to come back because I have friends who I want to see and I get on with the people who work here. And it is good to be in touch with the people who helped me with college as they know how to support me with this best because they were there from the start.

**JW:** We don't think becoming an adult should be like turning a light off. It has got to be a gradual process. We should recognise that support should not just come to an end. And that is why I'm really proud that we have something called 'staying close' that allows people to have that support network.

**JPW:** I'd like support that carries on past 18, 21 or 25. We all need support during challenging times but we can also offer advice for the day-to-day problems. It's making sure care leavers know they are not on their own, that they have someone they can talk to and a safety net around them.

**D:** I like that St Christopher's doesn't drop you once you're "too old". I go to the drop-in centre and stay in touch with my worker.

**BO:** I would love for us to be in a position where we can support people forever.

**Dominique**

**Louisa**

**Leah**

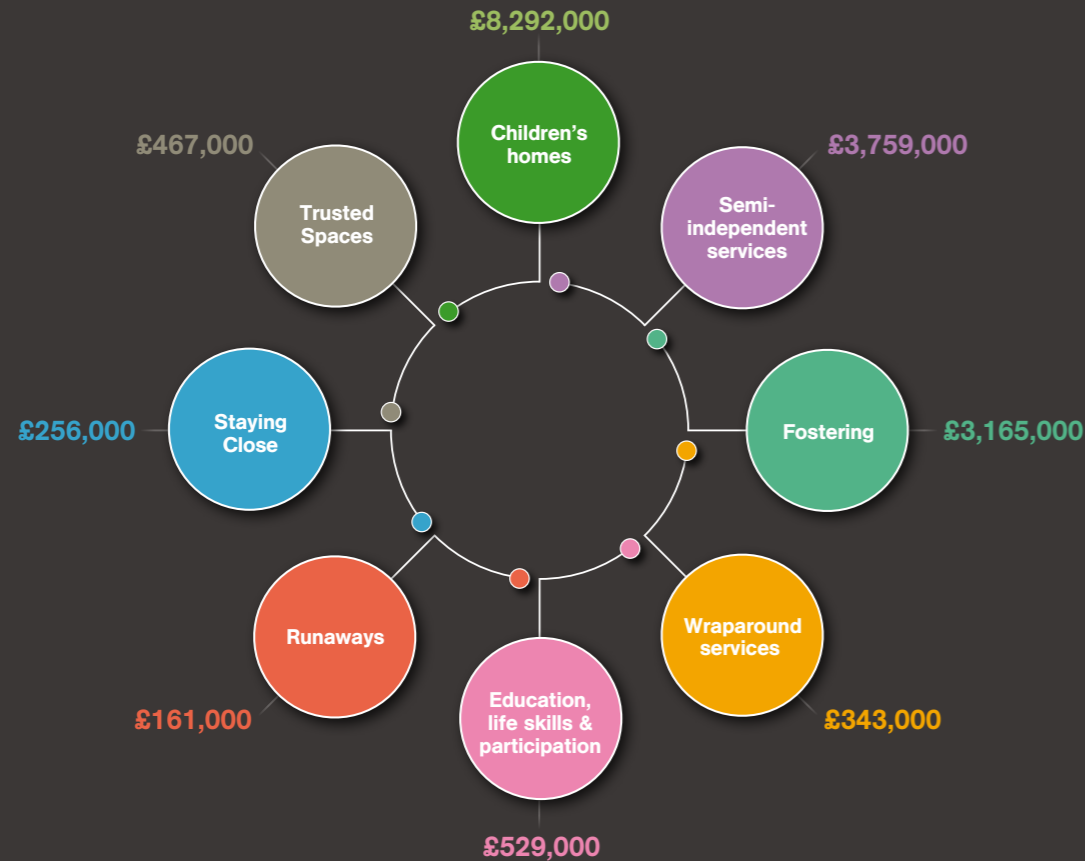
## Finances

Last year we spent just under

# £18,500,000

supporting children and young people

The main areas of expenditure were:



We spent **£267,000** training staff

## We couldn't have done it without you

Thank you to the below organisations for supporting our work.

- Achieving for Children
- Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Barclays
- BBC Children in Need
- Bedford Borough Council
- Birmingham Children's Trust
- Bracknell Forest Council
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cardiff County Council
- Castletown Ale Drinkers
- Central Bedfordshire
- City Bridge Trust
- Coventry Council
- Department for Education
- Derbyshire County Council
- Dudley Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Elizabeth Clucas Charitable Trust
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Essex County Council
- Fairer Fostering Partnership
- Fowler Smith and Jones Trust
- G D Herbert Charitable Trust
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Hickinbothams
- Home Office
- Housing Matters
- Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce
- Isle of Man Constabulary
- Isle of Man Drug and Alcohol Team
- Isle of Man Foodbank
- Isle of Man Government
- Isle Learn
- LandAid Charitable Trust
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicester City Council
- Life in London Trust
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Little Lives UK
- London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
- London Borough of Barnet
- London Borough of Bexley
- London Borough of Bromley
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Croydon
- London Borough of Ealing
- London Borough of Enfield
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Lambeth
- London Borough of Lewisham
- London Borough of Newham
- London Borough of Southwark
- London Borough of Sutton
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Borough of Wandsworth
- Luton Borough Council
- M Moser Associates Limited
- MAC-UK
- Madlug
- Manchester City Council
- March & McLennan
- Pacific Fund Systems Limited
- Peacock Charitable Trust
- Peterborough City Council
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Sandwell Children's Trust
- Sisters of the Holy Cross Charitable Trust
- Social Pedagogy Professional Association
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Thurrock Borough Council
- Tusla Ireland
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- West London Alliance
- Westminster City Council
- Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- 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:

 [www.stchris.org.uk](http://www.stchris.org.uk)

 [referrals@stchris.org.uk](mailto:referrals@stchris.org.uk)

 020 8780 7800 / 01624 660292

 St Christopher's Fellowship

 StChris1870

1 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SZ  
11-12 Hope Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 1AQ



**Caring for children and young people since 1870**  
**Goaill kiarail jeh paitchyn as sleih aegey neayr's 1870**

A Company Limited by Guarantee in England No. 321509 and Isle of Man No. 111692C  
Registered Charity No. 207782 in England and Wales and 927 in the Isle of Man.  
Homes and Communities Agency No. LH1832