

1256639

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private company that also owns two other children's homes in an adjoining region. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager left the home in November 2019. A new manager was appointed in December 2019. He has yet to submit an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 7 January 2020

Date of last inspection: 26 June 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

Since the previous inspection, two children have left the home. This was because senior managers decided that staff could not keep them safe. Staff were unable to get this child to engage in external therapeutic support. On one occasion, staff were not able to manage a child's behaviour and this resulted in the home contacting the police to assist. On other occasions, incidents resulted in significant damage to the environment and bullying threats made to the other children.

Senior managers have also decided that they cannot keep a current child safe and there are plans for the child to move. Significant concerns are in relation to the child going missing, and the negative impact the behaviours of this child is having on the other child currently living in the home. However, leaders and managers have responded effectively and are working closely with the child's placing authority and safeguarding agencies to agree strategies to keep the child safe until they leave the home.

At this inspection, the newly appointed manager said that he will be conducting an internal management review of the reasons why staff have not been able to keep the children safe, and for the need to end the children's placements.

Since the previous inspection, the incidents of children being missing from the home have increased significantly. Leaders and managers have taken effective action and instigated meetings with the children's placing authorities to address their concerns, and agree strategies to keep the children safe. However, this inspection identified a serious concern in relation to the actions to take if a child is found after being reported missing. The manager took immediate action and addressed this concern with the child's placing authority. As a result of this, measures were immediately put in place and extra staffing was agreed to ensure the availability of staff to return the child home safely.

Generally, staff respond effectively and search for children when they go missing. However, on one occasion, staff did not follow a child's agreed missing-from-home protocol and did not report the child missing within the agreed time. This potentially placed the child at risk of harm. In addition, some of the missing-from-home records for one child do not confirm that an independent return home interview has taken place, and the subsequent action that has been taken.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's risks. However, despite their known vulnerabilities, a child's risk assessment does not identify the known risks of the child travelling alone in a taxi to school and how this is managed and the risk reduced.

Staff ensure that children receive guidance and support in managing most aspects of their healthcare needs. However, the current children's health plans do not clearly record the actions to take to support children to stop smoking.

Restraint is used as a last resort to keep children and others safe. Leaders and managers review and evaluate restraint records to ensure that the intervention used is proportionate and appropriate. Staff seek children's views of the intervention used and these views are clearly recorded. However, not all staff have received the opportunity to a debrief and reflect on their practice following the use of an intervention.

Staff ensure that they have regular discussions with children about important matters in the children's lives. Good record keeping demonstrates that staff clearly evaluate the discussions with the children and record what the child has achieved, and the impact on the child.

Leaders and managers are effectively engaging with the children's education providers to support the children in attending education. They raise their concerns with the children's placing authorities when there are worries around their attendance and behaviour at school. This demonstrates good partnership working.

Children continue to enjoy a good range of activities. Photographs and memory books are kept for children to take with them when they leave the home.

Since the previous inspection, significant improvements have been made to the home's environment. At the time of this inspection, the home was clean and generally well presented despite some recent damage to fixtures and fittings.

Two of three requirements made at the previous inspection have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2019	Full	Good
18/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/02/2018	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
10: The health and well-being standard The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that children's placement plans clearly provide staff with specific protocols to detail the actions taken to encourage children to stop smoking.	28/02/2020
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) In particular, ensure that all children's risk assessments reflect the child's current know risks and how these are to be managed and reduced.	28/02/2020
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	28/02/2020

that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(2)(c)) In particular, ensure that all staff follow the agreed protocols when children are missing from the home.	
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(2)(c)) In particular, ensure that the home's records detail that an independent return home interview has taken place and information is gathered to ensure improved care practice.	28/02/2020
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i))	28/02/2020

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256639

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Hazlewoods, Windsor House, Bayshill Road,
Cheltenham GL50 3AT

Responsible individual: Louis Stuart-Kelso

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

David Kidner, social care inspector

Joy Howick, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
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