

1256639

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children.

The registered manager resigned from the post in February 2022 but has continued to manage the home while a new manager is recruited.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
26/06/2019	Full	Good
18/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have good opportunities and experiences while living in this home. The three children living in the home are supported by a team of staff who know them very well. Staff help the children to spend time with their friends and family and socialise in the community. One professional spoke of the 'excellent quality of relationship the manager has with a parent', which has been instrumental in the rebuilding of the child and their father's relationship.

Children make progress from their starting points. All the children go to school and have a 100% attendance record. They are involved in clubs and have interests. They have developed a range of hobbies that improve their physical health and social skills. For example, one child has significantly improved their physical and emotional health outcomes because they regularly go to the gym, walk to school, and play an active role in a Judo club.

Children are doing well because they have developed a good sense of belonging and permanence in the home. The inspector observed warm and caring interactions between the children and the staff. One parent told the inspector that the staff have done 'an amazing job' and 'I feel my child is so safe and secure in the home'.

Overall, records are of a good quality. They capture the conversations the staff have with the children, and the support staff give them when they are upset and worried. In particular, the inspector found extensive records of how the staff have helped the three children living in the home understand why one of the children recently moved out of the home.

The children live in a comfortable and spacious home. In the main, it is well kept and tidy. The inspector noted some areas of the home that require attention and decoration. The interim manager is in the process of actioning these improvements.

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

Since the previous inspection in January 2022, one child has moved out. This followed a series of incidents over a two-day period when the staff were challenged by the child's behaviours. Despite attempts by the staff, they were unable to prevent damage to the home and to another child's personal belongings, and injury to a member of staff. Leaders and managers recognised that the home was unable to meet the needs of the child and so took decisive action and moved the child.

The children are supported positively whenever they are worried or upset. This is because the staff team knows the children well and identify potential risks and triggers. Plans for reducing these risks are detailed and effective. That said, since the previous inspection the children have witnessed one member of staff acting

unprofessionally. Leaders and managers responded swiftly and appropriately to the concern and the children have been supported.

The three children living in the home do not go missing and staff do not use physical intervention. Well-constructed care plans provide the staff team with strategies for supporting the children. Serious incidents in relation to the three children living in the home rarely take place.

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

The registered manager resigned from the post in February 2022. She has, however, with the support of senior team members, continued to lead and manage the home on an interim basis. Members of the senior leadership team confirm that they have successfully recruited a manager and are in the process of appointing this person. In the main, this has worked well. The inspector found sufficient action taken against the requirements made at the previous inspection. However, some shortfalls were found following this inspection.

Monitoring of the quality of care provided in the home takes place and informs the continued development of the home. However, the inspector found that the interim manager has failed to ensure fire drills for the staff and children take place regularly, and one record of a potentially serious incident lacked sufficient detail and did not accurately reflect the incident.

Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level in residential childcare, are currently undertaking the relevant course, or are new to the home. This means the children receive support from suitably qualified staff. The use of agency staff is kept to a minimum and only regular agency workers are used. Staff told the inspector that they receive regular, good-quality supervision from the interim manager or from senior members of the team. It was highlighted during the inspection the value and importance of agency workers having their practice supervised.

Following this inspection, two requirements and two recommendations are made. The shortfalls identified during this inspection do not impact on the safety of the children, but do require action by the provider.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due date
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xi)) This relates specifically to staff supporting the children when they are upset and not letting the children's behaviours negatively impact on one another.	12 August 2022
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))	8 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any agency staff that regularly work in the home receive regular supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children. This relates to the decoration of the games room, replacement kitchen, and the quality of the bedding for the staff's use. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

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

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1256639

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 9, Wheatstone Court, Waterwells Business Park, Davy Way, Gloucester GL2 2AQ

Responsible individual: Louis Stuart-Kelso

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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