

1269072

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2021.

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Since the last full inspection, the quality of care that children receive has significantly improved. Children say that they are safe and enjoy living at the home.

Children have good relationships with staff. Children enjoy taking part in activities inside and outside of the home. This helps children to build on their self-esteem and to experience activities that they enjoy. All children attend education full time and are making good progress.

Staff have improved the direct work provided to children. Since the last inspection, staff have helped children to understand healthy and safe relationships and how to stay safe online. Furthermore, the manager has planned for staff to receive further training to ensure that they have the skills to recognise and understand behavioural risks. As a result, the manager is responding to children's needs and improving staff knowledge.

Since the last inspection, the manager has ensured that staff and children have access to relevant records from the local authority. However, the home's internal plans still require improvement. For example, children do not have plans that give information on what support is being provided and how staff will meet children's needs. The managers recognise this shortfall. At the time of the inspection, managers were implementing a recording system to capture this information and the progress children make. As a result, the requirement has been repeated and will be monitored at the next inspection.

The home is well presented and homely. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the communal kitchen and bathrooms. The manager has plans to redecorate the living room and said that she will be seeking children's wishes to influence the new decor.

The safety of children

The manager has made improvements to children's written risk assessments. Assessments now contain clear guidance about children's risks and the reduction measures for staff to use. In addition, the manager has effective oversight of children's behaviours. The manager carries out a monthly review of behavioural trends and patterns to identify what strategies are effective when responding to children's vulnerabilities.

Since the last inspection, there has been no use of physical intervention in the home. Managers have taken steps to improve staff's skills in record-keeping relating to restraint practice should an intervention take place.

There have been no allegations or complaints made by children. However, the manager carried out a review of an allegation considered at the last inspection and ensured that the child received a response to explain the outcome of an investigation.

Since the last inspection, the manager has reviewed the company's medication policy and ensures that children's medication is now stored safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the day-to-day management. The registered manager has recently returned to the home from parental leave. An effective improvement plan was implemented following the last inspection. Action has been taken to address eight requirements and one recommendation.

Since the last inspection, staff have attended a range of training courses on subjects including restorative practice, contextual safeguarding, and radicalisation. These courses help staff to understand how the children's previous experiences are presented through their behaviours.

The manager has ensured that all staff have received an appraisal. Furthermore, the manager has increased the direct support provided to staff when they take on managerial responsibilities. The staff say that they feel well supported by the manager and that the team is working collaboratively to meet the children's needs.

The manager has implemented a workforce development plan. This plan provides staff with clarity on expectations for training and supervision. The manager recognises this as a beneficial tool to monitor staff development.

A new independent visitor visits the home. The manager said that this is beneficial and that feedback is used to improve the development of the home. The new visitor obtains valuable feedback from children, professionals, parents and others to help inform and understand the quality of care provided.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/08/2021	Full	Good
09/12/2019	Full	Good
25/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) This specifically relates to the registered provider ensuring that children have agreed and clear plans which support and inform effective care. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	7 May 2023

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1269072

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Lane

Registered manager: Carleen Dobson

Inspector

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

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