

1236916

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Full 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. The company owns two other children's homes. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since June 2016.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 December 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 14 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/12/2017	Full	Requires improvement
10/02/2017	Full	Requires improvement

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
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the registered manager or a representative attends the monthly high-risk planning meetings for a child as arranged by the local authority.</p>	25/01/2019
<p>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are supported and</p>	25/01/2019

<p>encouraged to attend full-time education, and that additional learning opportunities provided by staff are recorded.</p>	
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(ix))</p>	<p>25/01/2019</p>
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children are not left alone in the</p>	<p>25/12/2018</p>

home.	
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, undertake a management review of events that led up to children going missing from the home without staff's knowledge, and act on the findings of this review to ensure that children are always kept safe.</p>	25/01/2019
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff take reasonable steps to return children safely to the home when they have been found after being reported missing.</p>	25/12/2018
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-</p>	25/01/2019

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff receive training in drug and alcohol awareness and substance misuse.</p>	
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>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))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff follow the agreed protocols when children are missing from the home.</p>	31/12/2018
<p>19: Behaviour management and discipline</p> <p>No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child.</p> <p>The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— any measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child. (Regulation 19 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) and (j))</p> <p>In particular, explore other measures to support children to manage their emotions and feelings rather than turning off the electricity supply to children's wall sockets in their bedrooms.</p>	31/12/2018
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with</p>	31/12/2018

<p>appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that discussions held with staff in relation to not following agreed protocols are clearly recorded.</p>	
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the time of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii))</p>	31/12/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home and are encouraged to participate in those activities. In particular, continue to involve and explore different approaches to encourage children to engage in activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leaders and managers do not ensure that children's safety and welfare are protected. Some children do not receive sufficient, effective support to help them to manage their behaviour and feelings. This has resulted in them behaving in a manner that places them and others at significant risk of harm.

Some children regularly go missing from home, and incidents of aggression towards staff have occurred. In addition, a child has assaulted another child. On several occasions, children have left the home without staff knowing that they have done so. Since the last inspection, a child moved out of the home in an unplanned manner. This was because senior managers decided that staff could not keep the child safe.

There have been occasions when children have been left alone in the house without staff supervision and guidance. The children who were resident in the home at the time of the inspection have complex needs and are vulnerable. This poor practice places the children

at significant risk of harm.

The staff team fails to use effective strategies to engage children and to manage their behaviours in a nurturing way. On one occasion, staff turned off the electricity supply to a child's power sockets in their bedrooms to gain compliance. This outdated practice does not demonstrate that staff are building positive relationships with the children.

Children living in this home do not receive full-time education. Staff said that they are providing children with additional learning opportunities. However, staff are not keeping records to demonstrate that children are receiving sufficient educational opportunities in line with their rights and needs.

There is a failure to engage children and keep them occupied, or to help them to develop new hobbies and interests. The attempts that staff make to encourage children to take part in a range of activities in the home and in the wider community are not always successful. Some children regularly refuse these opportunities. As a result, one child spends significant periods of time in his room.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

The staff team does not ensure that children are always suitably supervised or that their whereabouts can be accounted for. On three occasions, children have left the home without the staff's knowledge. On one such occasion, three children left the home in the early hours of the morning, but staff were unaware that they had left the home. Staff were alerted to this when the police arrived at the home to advise them that the children were being questioned by the police in relation to potential criminal activity in the local community. Due to poor staff supervision, children have been placed at risk of unnecessary criminalisation.

Staff have not taken effective action to keep children safe. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of occasions that children have gone missing from the home. On one occasion, staff did not follow a child's agreed missing-from-home protocols. Staff did not search for her in the areas identified in the protocol. This potentially placed the child at risk of harm. On another occasion, staff located a child who had been reported missing, but staff did not take reasonable steps to ensure that he returned home safely.

The manager fails to recognise the risks associated with children's needs and presenting behaviours. Despite their known vulnerabilities, children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans identify that they can be left alone in the house. This is unsafe practice that places children at significant risk of harm.

The staff team fails to engage effectively with children to prevent violent incidents from occurring. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the use of physical intervention. Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children and others safe. However, restraint records do not include the actual time of the intervention. On one occasion, when a child became physically aggressive towards another child, staff

used intervention to keep a child safe. In addition, there have been several serious incidents in the home when children have been verbally and physically aggressive towards staff and have caused damage to the property.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Serious shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. The home is not managed effectively, and staff have failed to keep children safe.

A serious and concerning shortfall in the leadership and management of the home is the failure of the registered manager to attend, or to send a representative to, several planned monthly high-risk planning meetings for a child who has significant care and support needs. This poor practice demonstrates a lack of nurture and concern for the welfare of the child. It reduces the effectiveness of multi-disciplinary meetings to support the child because the primary carer is absent.

The registered manager has not conducted internal investigations when children have left the home without the knowledge of staff. Failure to undertake a management review of these events does not demonstrate reflective practice and fails to establish if there are lessons to be learned to ensure that children are always kept safe.

The registered manager has failed to record the discussions that have taken place with staff when they have not followed the agreed missing-from-home protocols. This does not demonstrate effective management of staff to ensure improved care practice.

Staff received a wide range of mandatory training. However, not all staff have received specific training in relation to drug and alcohol awareness and substance misuse.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1236916

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: Leon James

Inspector

David Kidner: social care inspector

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