

# 1236916

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Limited

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 and he has recently obtained the level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 25 July 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** requires improvement to be good

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 29 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
29/01/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/12/2018	Full	Inadequate
10/02/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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
<p>10: The health and well-being standard</p> <p>The health and well-being standard is that–</p> <p>the health needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure–</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.</p> <p>(Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff continue to further explore ways to support the children to cease misusing substances.</p>	<p>31/10/2019</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>31/10/2019</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>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 complete knife checks in line with the protocol that the registered manager has introduced.</p>	31/10/2019
<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>	31/10/2019

<p>(Regulation 12 (1), (2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff continue to further explore approaches to encourage children to return home at the agreed times, and not to go missing.</p>	
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (7)(a))</p>	<p>31/10/2019</p>

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

The overall experiences and progress of young people require improvement. Despite the actions taken by staff to address some of the weaknesses identified at the last full inspection, some actions have not been effective. However, young people have made some slow and steady progress.

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in young people not returning home at the agreed times and going missing. When out in the local community, one young person has been at risk of harm and potential criminal charges following two serious incidents. Staff are supporting the young person with this.

Staff continue to provide support and encourage young people not to misuse substances. Since the last inspection, an external agency has regularly visited the young people to talk to them about the misuse of substances. Initially, young people made some progress, and there was a period of time when there was a notable reduction in their use. However, recently staff were concerned that substance misuse had re-occurred.

Staff develop positive relationships with young people. They show them genuine warmth and affection. At the time of this inspection, the inspector observed staff engaging with young people in a supportive and nurturing manner. Young people are engaging positively in education and making progress. Staff work closely with education providers to ensure that young people receive the most appropriate education that meets their specific learning needs. At the time of the inspection, one young person spoke to the

inspector about how much he enjoys going fishing as part of his learning package.

Staff said that the young people are engaging more in activities with staff in the home and wider community. Young people have made friends in the local community and regularly see their families. One young person has recently enjoyed a holiday abroad with staff.

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

Recently, the incidences of young people not returning home at the agreed times and going missing have increased. Staff follow the young people's individual missing from home protocols and actively search for young people. However, on occasions, young people have been engaging in activities that potentially place them at risk of harm. For example, young people continue to misuse substances and, on some occasions, a young person has returned home from missing with unexplained injuries. Staff have taken prompt action and have raised their concerns with safeguarding agencies and the young people's social workers.

Positive behaviour is promoted and restraint is rarely used. If used, it is used as a last resort to keep young people and others safe. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are provided with comprehensive behaviour support plans that guide staff in how to support young people in managing their emotions and feelings. Staff said that the plans are clear and helpful.

The impact of staff's work in supporting young people in managing their emotions and feelings has started to have a positive impact. However, further work is needed as young people continue to push boundaries. For example, on one occasion a young person assaulted a member of staff, one young person started a fire in the garden and there has been some damage to the home's environment. On one occasion, staff called the police to support them to manage a young person's behaviour. In addition, the home has received two complaints from neighbours about the behaviour of the young people. The registered manager has taken effective action to investigate and resolve the complaints.

Following an incident in the home when knives went missing, the registered manager took effective action and notified the police. In addition, he completed a management review of the incident. As a result of this, staff have been provided with a daily protocol for the auditing of the knives. However, staff have not always followed the prescribed protocol.

Leaders and managers respond to safeguarding concerns effectively, and staff receive regular safeguarding training and demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding processes.

Staff are provided with detailed risk assessments that identify the known risks and ways in which these are to be managed and reduced. These are regularly reviewed and

updated.

Leaders and managers ensure that there is a safe recruitment and selection process that safeguards young people.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the leadership and management of the home. The registered manager has a greater oversight and has improved the monitoring of records in the home. Following serious incidents, he has undertaken management reviews of care practices and implemented protocols and systems to improve practice.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has undertaken a detailed review of the care and support provided and has identified realistic targets for improvement. He responds effectively to recommendations made by the independent visitor. However, since the last inspection, Ofsted has not received all the independent visitors' monthly reports.

Partnership working is effective. Social workers spoke positively of the commitment of the staff to ensure that young people have positive experiences and good outcomes. They spoke of the good communication between them and the staff and of how well the staff engage with parents.

Staff are provided with comprehensive children's placement plans that are regularly reviewed and updated. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to meet the young people's needs. Detailed records demonstrate the support and guidance that staff provide to young people to support them in their everyday living.

Since the last inspection, staff have received further training in alcohol and drugs awareness. They demonstrated a good understanding of their learning. They spoke well of the support they receive from the leaders and managers. The registered manager takes effective action when there are concerns in relation to poor staff practice.

## **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

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019