

1236916

Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private provider and offers care and accommodation for up to three children and young people. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children and young people with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The home has continued to be managed by the registered manager since the assurance visit in September 2020.

Inspection date: 23 February 2021

This monitoring visit

This visit was carried out following Ofsted receiving a notification of a significant incident.

The visit included a visit to the home by the inspector, and discussions with the registered manager and two staff. In addition, the inspector remotely reviewed records.

There are currently two children living in the home.

The manager and staff team have, at times, been challenged by the behaviours of the children. To manage these behaviours, the registered manager has taken the action of routinely locking one internal door overnight. The implementation of this restrictive practice fails to support child development and negates the use of more well-thought-out, creative care practices.

Risk assessments are, in the main, complete and evidence the progress the children have made since living in the home. However, the inspector found no recorded risks that legitimised the practice of locking the internal doors. Further to this, positive behaviour plans do not detail how staff support the children to live safely in their home without locking doors.

The use of physical intervention to manage the children's behaviours rarely takes place. However, the inspector found that on two occasions the physical intervention could have been avoided and there was a direct correlation between the locking of the door and the subsequent behaviours.

The registered manager has failed to recognise that he has authorised the use of prohibited measures when giving sanctions to children. For example, the inspector found that in contravention of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, on one occasion a child was not driven to visit their parent, children had had financial penalties imposed on them that were unreasonable, and measures to prevent access to the internet were ineffective.

Records capture the creative measures taken by staff to keep the children engaged in learning throughout the period of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown. There is evidence of management oversight across these records.

Two recommendations made following the assurance visit in September 2020 have been met. Two requirements in respect of leadership and management and behaviour management have been made following this monitoring visit.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 14/01/2020 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 24/07/2019 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 29/01/2019 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 11/12/2018 | Full | Inadequate |

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>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—</p> <p>any restriction, other than one imposed by a court or in accordance with regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), on—</p> <p>visits to the child by the child's parents, relatives or friends;</p> <p>imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation;</p> <p>any measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(c)(ii)(f)(j))</p> <p>Leaders and managers must not impose any restriction on a child from visiting their parent</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure that internal doors are not locked as a way of managing the young people's behaviours.</p> <p>The financial sanctioning of children's behaviours must be kept under review to ensure that all sanctions are fair, reasonable and effective.</p> <p>The withholding of access to the internet must be reviewed to ensure it is effective.</p> | 30 April 2021 |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| <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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h))</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure that risk assessments are kept up to date and reflect ongoing risks.</p> <p>Behaviour management plans must provide staff with clear strategies to better support the children to reduce their risk-taking behaviours.</p> | <p>30 April 2021</p> |
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Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken by leaders and managers following an incident that was notified to Ofsted.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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