

# 1236916

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

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 registered manager has been in post since the home was registered in June 2016.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 23 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 11 to 12 May 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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:** 14 January 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## 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

## Inspection judgements

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

The children benefit from being cared for by a staff team that knows them very well. Relationships are good and the children have adults they can talk to and who they trust. The children told the inspectors that they were happy living in the home; this was confirmed by the children's social workers. However, despite these positive relationships, not all the children are making sufficient progress across all areas.

Two children who have lived in the home for more than one year are not consistently engaging in formal learning. The inspectors identified too many missed opportunities to engage the children with learning, and there was unnecessary delay in sourcing the appropriate teaching materials. As a result, the children's educational outcomes are poor.

The children have had limited opportunities to socialise and make friends due to the restrictions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been compounded by the fact that some of the children have not been supported to go to school. Consequently, although the children enjoy spending time with the staff and benefit from days out, they have few or no friends to socialise with.

The children attend all necessary health appointments. Nevertheless, despite one child previously being supported by CAHMS, not all children are currently accessing therapeutic services to support their mental health. Although there is a plan for all staff to attend THRIVE training, which will help them understand better the complex needs of the children, this has not yet started therefore the impact is not yet measurable. One child is not receiving the therapeutic support needed to address their low self-esteem and self-worth.

Since the children moved into the home, staff have made attempts to collect photos and mementos, for example from birthdays and days out. However, for one child, better attention needs to be given to ensure that they are captured and stored in a way that will help each child remember and make sense of their experience of living in the home.

The home is spacious and comfortable. Some rooms are decorated well and are homely. However, the inspectors found some areas need refreshing, and repairs need to take place to ensure the children feel valued and the whole house is of a good quality.

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

The children live in a home that is safe and they are cared for by staff who understand how to manage risk. Since the previous monitoring visit, in February

2021, there has been a reduction in the number of times when staff are challenged by the children's behaviours. Children do not go missing and staff are not using physical restraint to manage the children's behaviours.

The restrictive practice of locking the door of a communal room overnight, identified at the monitoring visit in February 2021, is no longer taking place. Sanctions are rarely used and are, in the main, restorative. However, sanctions could benefit from a review of their effectiveness. For example, preventing a child from accessing the home's Wi-Fi was recorded as not always effective because the child has their own mobile internet package.

In the main, staff are supported to look after the children through training and a range of assessments and support plans. However, the inspectors noted that not all risk assessments were up to date and they failed to include all known risks. For example, smoking and accessing a car with the intent to drive. Furthermore, the manager had failed to evaluate the impact on one child of the introduction of family visits.

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

The registered manager so far, has not demonstrated the capacity to sufficiently improve the home to get to good. It is of concern that since its registration in 2016, the home has been judged by Ofsted to 'require improvement'. On this occasion, the registered manager failed to ensure that all children who live in the home make measurable and sustained progress. Leaders and managers have failed to produce a development plan that strategically and dynamically identifies and addresses the continued poor performance of the home and the subsequent impact on the children.

Despite there being a stable team of staff who are passionate and committed, the outcomes for some of the children remain poor. Leaders and managers have failed to recognise the need for external professional guidance and training.

The registered manager has failed to ensure through the home's monitoring and reviewing processes that all records are up to date, used in a consistent way and accurately reflect risk. Some records were of a good quality and demonstrated the skills of the staff. However, the registered manager has not analysed and evaluated all records. As a result, opportunities are being missed to improve the outcomes for the children and to develop the home.

Following this inspection, Ofsted held a case review to consider the continued poor leadership and management of the home. From this, the leaders and managers have been asked to produce an action plan that will address the requirements made following the inspection and the continued underperformance in the leadership and management of the home.



## 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>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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</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)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>This relates to the leaders and managers producing an action plan that clearly and dynamically sets out the strategies that will ensure all children's outcomes are improved.</p> <p>Leaders and managers should access learning to inform the improvement and development of the home.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the previous monitoring visit and is restated.</p>	30 July 2021

<p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (b))</p> <p>This particularly refers to leaders and managers seeking appropriate advice to ensure children are provided, without delay, with access to a range of alternative services that can support their development and mental wellbeing..</p>	<p>30 July 2021</p>
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>The conditions are—</p> <p>that the care is delivered by a person who—</p> <p>has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care. (Regulation 6 (a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(vi)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring the home remains in good condition and is clean, and repairs and to damage are actioned without delay.</p> <p>That all staff, including leaders and managers, are provided with training to better support children to engage in</p>	<p>30 July 2021</p>

<p>meaningful learning and socialising opportunities.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child’s education or training provider and the child’s placing authority;</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;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities, and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> <p>This relates to ensuring there is no delay in accessing resources for children who are receiving home tutoring</p>	<p>30 July 2021</p>



<p>and/or alternative forms of learning.</p> <p>Ensure staff and leaders and managers are helped to understand, through expert advice and training, the barriers to learning that children may face.</p>	
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</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 (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to staff being provided with expert training so that they can better support the children to improve their health outcomes.</p> <p>Leaders and managers must ensure children's plans specifically detail how staff will support children to reduce/stop smoking, eat a consistently healthy diet, and engage with mentoring and/or therapeutic services.</p>	30 July 2021
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	30 July 2021

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure photographs and mementos for each child are captured and stored in a way that will help each child remember their experience of living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

## 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:** 1236916

**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:** Leon James

## Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector  
Michelle Oxley, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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