

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 privately owned and provides care for up to three children.

The manager has been in post and registered with Ofsted since the home registered in June 2016.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 1 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2022	Full	Good
21/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by a consistent staff team and have built trusted and secure relationships with staff they can depend on. Staff devote time listening to children so they can fully understand their needs. Staff use this knowledge to promote children's welfare and help protect them. Children quickly develop a sense of belonging in the home. One child commented that they love living in their home, that the energy and the atmosphere is nice and relaxing, and they feel comfortable and at home. All children have made good progress from their starting points.

Children benefit from being able to enjoy a range of activities in the UK and abroad. Staff encourage children to explore new interests and partake in new experiences to support their development. For example, children recently enjoyed snowboarding in Andorra. Children are encouraged by staff to live a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a well-balanced diet. Children spend time at the local gym with staff and independently. Staff understand the positive impact this can have on children's mental well-being.

A focus is placed on ensuring that children who are soon to move into adulthood have developed all the skills they require to safely live independently. Staff help children to gain a good understanding of how they can best protect themselves from unsafe situations and minimise the risk of harm. This gives children the best possible chance to succeed in their future. One parent stated that staff are giving their child all they need to prepare them, so they can make a good start in life.

Children who are new to the home are welcomed by experienced staff, who have carefully planned for their arrival. Staff ensure that the thoughts and feelings of the children already living in the home are considered. Staff are quick to allay children's anxieties and help ensure that they quickly feel safe and settled in their new home.

Children that move out of the home are supported to have positive endings, with one child successfully returning home to live with their family. Staff keep in touch with children who move on and continue to offer support and guidance to them.

Staff are committed to ensuring that children enjoy regular, meaningful time with their family. Staff are proactive, work positively with parents and understand the importance of ensuring that strong family relationships are maintained. One relative remarked that staff are good at supporting them to see their child.

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

Children living in the home feel safe. They are cared for by a competent and stable staff team, and staff are compassionate and provide good support. Children have trusted staff who they can talk to and share their worries. Staff have an in-depth understanding of children's complex needs and know how to manage and support

these needs effectively on a day-to-day basis. One child stated that staff were lovely, reliable and have their back, and that they feel safe.

Staff promote positive behaviour and are careful not to be punitive in their approach. Clear and consistent boundaries are set by staff, who take a positive risk approach to help keep children safe. Staff engage in purposeful conversations with children to gain additional knowledge of how they feel to help de-escalate incidents quickly when they arise in the future. Staff support children to learn how to manage their feelings safely and feel secure. Staff's professionalism has helped ensure that restraint has not been used.

Professionals all commented that staff are good at keeping children safe. Staff follow risk assessments which effectively address all known vulnerabilities for each individual child. Children have been supported to develop the skills to help minimise their own risks and reduce their risk of harm.

When children go missing, staff promptly follow a clear protocol and take well-coordinated action to reduce the risk of harm. Staff inform all relevant professional bodies to proactively help protect the child. Learning takes place after each episode of children going missing from care, and staff practice is revised to enable the most effective response and help keep children safe in the future. Missing from home incidents decrease over time.

Staff support children to take age-appropriate risks. Staff are very flexible in their approach, and adapt their practice to enable children to spend meaningful time with their friends in the community without any unnecessary restrictions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced and effective manager. The home is fully staffed and retention is high. This means that children are being supported by a consistent, well-established staff team that knows them well. One child's social worker stated that the child had a great relationship with staff, who are so consistent.

The manager ensures that the plans for each individual child are robust and fully identify children's bespoke needs. Plans reflect the local authority care plan for each child and are regularly updated to consider any changes that occur. The child-centred plans clearly detail children's achievements and highlight the good progress children are making and plans for their future.

The manager uses learning from incidents to inform staff practice. They also identify additional specific training for staff to undertake, so staff can enhance the care and support they give to children and help ensure positive outcomes are experienced.

Staff put the children at the centre of everything they do and want the very best for them. Staff feel valued, well supported and encouraged to progress and develop. This helps ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to enable children to

continue to grow. A parent commented that their child could not be placed in a better home.

The manager has built effective working relationships with social workers, schools and other partner agencies. The manager successfully advocates for children to ensure that they have the best possible chance to succeed and experience positive outcomes. One placing child's social worker remarked that communication from the home was excellent, and that staff advocate for the child on a very high level and just want the very best for them.

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Lane

Registered manager: Leon James

Inspectors

Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector
Nicola Lownds, Social Care Inspector

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