

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run. It provides care for up to seven children who have social and/or emotional difficulties. The home is in the same grounds as another children's home and a school, both of which are separately registered and owned by the same provider.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2018. She holds suitable qualifications for this role.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 August 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: 10 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from receiving wraparound care, including education and therapeutic support. Staff create a loving environment for children and provide high-quality care that meets children's needs. Children develop trusting relationships with the adults supporting them. The clinical team works directly with children and provides regular guidance to staff which is responsive to children's changing needs. Children attend the on-site school, which enables care staff and teachers to work together to help children achieve their aspirations. As a result, children's needs are understood, and their individual care plans reflect their goals and monitor their progress.

Children are prepared well when moving into or from the home. Their transitions are in line with the child's needs. The registered manager supports new care staff to ensure that children experience a seamless move. This helps to minimise disruption, and consequently, children settle quickly.

Children live in a welcoming home that is well maintained. Children enjoy spending time both in their personalised en-suite bedrooms as well as with other children and staff in communal areas of the home. Staff embrace opportunities to celebrate with children. They decorate the house in line with seasons and festivals and encourage children to grow plants in the garden. This recognises children's identities and enhances children's lived experiences.

Staff welcome children's families and previous carers into the home. This is particularly important for those children who are living a distance away from their families. Some children also have the opportunity to maintain long-standing friendships. Staff therefore support children to maintain links with people who are important to them.

Children attend community groups, such as Cubs and a youth club. Children enjoy a wide range of activities with staff, including days out to the seaside or historic towns and cultural festivals. Children are encouraged to learn new skills that support their preparation for independence.

Children now work towards incentives that motivate them to achieve their targets. Some children struggle with this change of approach to behaviour management and feel that there are elements of inequality. In addition, some children have recently witnessed another child experiencing distress. This has been frightening for them. Leaders recognise this impact and are working collaboratively to best address the needs of all children living in the home.

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

The registered manager works tirelessly to help children living in the home feel safe.

Children are listened to. When they make allegations, direction and support from the clinical team enables staff to ensure their practice is aligned to children's care needs. The registered manager appropriately reports safeguarding concerns to the local authority designated officer and Ofsted. Her oversight is strong, and records show how children are safeguarded.

Children's assessments and plans are mostly comprehensive and dynamic. For the majority of children, their risks are appropriately considered. A specific risk for one child was not reflected in their risk assessment, and therefore, measures to mitigate this were not applied. However, discussion with the clinical staff about the child's behaviour had taken place.

On the small number of occasions when children have gone missing from home, staff have responded appropriately to report, locate and support them to return home quickly. They work in partnership with children's families to reduce risk. For a small number of children, their Philomena Protocol form did not contain details of all associates. This has the potential to cause a delay in identifying key contacts when reporting a child as missing from home to the police. The registered manager amended this during the inspection.

Staff develop relationships with children and support them to understand their experiences. This helps children to regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour. Staff use de-escalation techniques effectively when children appear unsettled. When staff intervene physically to manage children's behaviour, it is appropriate and proportionate. On a small number of occasions, a child has been debriefed by a member of staff who was involved in the hold. This limits independent oversight and the opportunity for a child to explore their lived experience. Aside from this, the registered manager uses learning and reflection from each incident to review children's support plans.

Children's medication is appropriately stored. The registered manager has responded appropriately to two medication administration errors. It has been recommended that all staff complete the refresher training, and there has been a medication and administration review.

Staff regularly seek children's views and assurance that they feel safe living in the home. The registered manager acts in response to children's complaints. Children are not always offered the opportunity to speak to someone independently following the resolution of a complaint or allegation. The registered manager has not therefore assured herself that the child is satisfied with the response and any arising changes to practice within the home.

The registered manager ensures that appropriate safe recruitment checks are sought for staff who come to work at the home. The registered manager reviews and monitors the progress of staff during their employment. She facilitates training with the clinical team, which supports staff to develop the skills required to care for children living in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has the highest aspirations for the children and staff in the home. Her leadership skills give staff clear direction and the ambition to help children achieve the best possible outcomes.

The registered manager has clear and inclusive visions for children and the development of the home. She encourages children to contribute to the local community through fundraising, visiting homeless people and donating to food banks. This models good citizenship as well as increases children's sense of self-worth.

Staff feel valued and speak positively about working at this home. They feel supported and encouraged by the registered manager to fulfil their roles to the highest standard. They receive regular supervision that promotes progress for children and professional development. The staff team provides children with consistency of care and an appropriate level of experience and skill. Staff know the children well and understand them and their behaviour. They demonstrate resilience and warmth towards the children.

A family member and all professionals who were spoken to report excellent levels of communication and commitment from the registered manager and the staff team. Children are described as being happy, and they receive excellent care planning throughout their journey while living in this home.

Overall, the registered manager's oversight and monitoring systems are robust. This improves the consistency and quality of care. However, not all of the children's records are monitored as effectively as they could be. The admissions register did not contain children's addresses before moving into the home. While most physical interventions were recorded well, there was a discrepancy in the description about a mark on a child following a hold. Children's debriefs are not dated. In addition, the electronic recording system did not flag up to the registered manager that one member of staff involved in a hold required a debrief. These areas have not been picked up in management oversight.

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, The 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This relates specifically to leaders ensuring that children's assessments and plans contain the relevant information to guide staff so that they know how to respond to reduce the potential risk of harm.	29 September 2023
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	29 September 2023

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(ii)(h)) This relates to independent oversight to ensure that the child is satisfied with the resolution to a complaint. This further relates to the oversight of monitoring and review systems to ensure that records are appropriate, accurate and dated.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)) This relates to the admission log including the address where the child was living immediately before moving into the home.	29 September 2023

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: 1244280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Registered provider address: Witherslack Group, Lupton Tower, Lupton,
Carnforth LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Tamara Pearcey

Registered manager: Michelle Hird

Inspectors

Joanna Warburton, Social Care Inspector
Rachel Fairhurst, Social Care Inspector

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