

1247559

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and provides therapeutic care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in February 2017, and the manager registered in August 2024.

Six children were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

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: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
07/07/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is a warm and welcoming environment. Staff help the children to personalise their bedrooms and communal spaces. The children's wishes and feelings are sought through regular children's meetings. There is evidence that the children's views are considered in the day-to-day running of the home.

Children's engagement in education and learning is good. All children have increased their education attendance significantly, which helps to ensure that children will have the best chance of succeeding in later life. Staff work hard to ensure that children complete any homework as required.

Staff support children to see their families and people who are close to them. The staff maintain regular communication with parents and carers and keep them updated about children's progress. This helps children to maintain their identity and continue to see people who are important to them.

The children say that they have good relationships with staff and key workers. They say that the manager is helpful and supportive and that they would go to the manager if they were unhappy or wished to make a complaint. This demonstrates that children feel valued and listened to.

Leaders and managers ensure that records are reviewed. However, not all children have up-to-date local authority plans. This compromises staff's ability to consistently plan children's care well.

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

Recruitment procedures and practices are safe and effective. All staff are checked and vetted before starting to work at the home. These checks ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children in the home.

Staff use positive behaviour approaches that are supported by therapeutic training. This avoids any use of negative or punitive measures to manage children's behaviour. Staff and children use the identified incentive system collaboratively to good effect.

Children have bespoke missing-from-home plans, and staff are aware of the procedures to follow should any child go missing from home. Missing-from-home incidents are managed consistently and effectively, leading to a reduction in the number of times that children are missing.

Some children have experienced physical interventions that were not deemed necessary. This can be a frightening and confusing experience for a child and should only be used when appropriate. Restraint practice has not always been safe or in line with prescribed

holds. This has led to one child being hurt. When changes to risks are identified, they are not always shared effectively with staff. This places children at unnecessary risk of harm.

Physical intervention records lack sufficient detail about incidents. This compromises leaders and managers' oversight of staff practice and their ability to identify if the use of the measure was necessary and effective.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led and managed by an ambitious and knowledgeable management team. The team demonstrates a clear understanding of therapeutic approaches when supporting children with complex needs and ensures that staff implement these in their practice.

Partnership working with professionals is a key strength of the manager and staff team. Feedback from professionals is positive. One social worker said, 'The manager's communication is excellent.' The independent reviewing officer for one child reported that the child is making really good progress from their starting point and that the staff are 'marvellous'.

Staff feel well supported in their roles by leaders and managers. They say that leaders and managers listen to them.

Staff attend regular training, which helps them to better understand the children's needs. This means that staff develop their skills to ensure that they implement best practice. Training is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets the changing needs of the staff and children.

Staff receive regular support through team meetings. However, not all risks are shared with staff in a timely and effective manner. Significant changes or increases in risk are not always cascaded to staff effectively so they can amend their practice to manage risk and meet the needs of the children.

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 registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and	12 December 2024

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the person completing debriefs with children, following the use of physical intervention, was not involved in the intervention. Also, the registered person must ensure that children have an opportunity to share how the use of intervention has impacted on them and their relationships with staff.	
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that restraint is only used when necessary and that all steps are taken to avoid the use of restraint.	12 December 2024
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all known risks to children are identified and shared with staff in order for them to provide a safe, effective and consistent response.	12 December 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they have the most up-to-date care plans from placing authorities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 1247559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Registered provider address: Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Mark Jarvill

Registered manager: Jessica McAvoy

Inspectors

James Meeks, Social Care Inspector

Lisa Mulcahy, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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