

1259631

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation to meet the nurturing, management, social, emotional and moral needs of up to seven young people, irrespective of gender, who are unable to live in a family context. The home is currently without a registered manager, although a new manager has been recruited.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 May 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: this is the first inspection

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

This new home was registered in October 2017 and this is the first inspection.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30) In particular, to ensure that young people receive an interview from someone independent of their care.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff get to know children well when they move in by spending extensive time with them. The manager and staff undertake a detailed assessment, which includes a clinical perspective from the on-site multi-disciplinary team. The care and educational staff also receive training and advice from clinical colleagues. This helps them to develop an excellent understanding of children's complex needs. This collaborative working offers children a consistent therapeutic approach across both settings.

The structured daily routines help children settle well into the home. They make progress from their starting points in different areas of their development. Children benefit from the consistent care from the committed staff team. A social worker said: 'In such a short time, the difference is amazing. He is like a different child.'

Staff provide children with a sense of belonging and stability in their lives. Staff show that they love and care about them. Children enjoy this nurturing care they receive. This helps them make positive and trusting relationships with staff. Children get to know the on-site clinicians. When they need therapeutic support, children receive a timely response from someone they know. This prevents delay in meeting their emotional needs.

Children have excellent attendance at the on-site school. They are making good educational progress. Staff are influential and provide children with emotional and practical support to attend. Staff provide informal educational opportunities, such as helping children to learn independent living skills.

Children have personalised bedrooms, they take pride in their home and enjoy helping staff to keep it tidy. Children enjoy the on-site amenities and leisure activities in the community. These new experiences help to promote children's social interaction with peers and this is widening their interests. This also leads to them having improved health and fitness. Staff are inventive at thinking of fun activities. Children enjoy spending time with staff and gain in confidence and improved self-esteem.

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

Children receive high levels of supervision, keeping them safe at home and in the community. Individualised and detailed risk assessments outline children's vulnerabilities. Staff use these to minimise potential risks and dangers alongside their knowledge of children's experiences of neglect and trauma. Staff understand and reflect on how this can affect children's emotional well-being and behaviour. Supporting children to express emotions has led to a reduction in self-harming behaviours.

There have been some missing episodes, but protocols are in place and staff respond quickly. Their actions have been effective and children no longer go missing or absent from the home. This has reduced the risk of exploitation or involvement in offending behaviour. Placing authorities have not always provided children with an independent return to home interview, but an agency has now been commissioned to undertake this task.

Children respond well to the new behaviour management strategies implemented by the interim manager. Staff reinforce positive behaviours with rewards. The use of a restorative approach has led to a reduction in negative behaviours. The staff's successful use of distractions, redirection and communication helps to keep young people calm. The frequency and duration of restraints have reduced as a result.

The creative staff use a wide range of therapeutic and practical worksheets. Individual sessions with children focus on specific issues and they are educated about important issues, such as racism and bullying. Children feel safe and are able to prompt discussions with staff about these issues. Staff also gain a useful insight into children's views and experiences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new manager has been recruited, but the home is currently without a registered manager. A manager from one of the company's sister homes provides management cover. The staff here speak of benefiting from his experience and guidance. New staff undergo a comprehensive induction. This follows on from careful vetting and safe recruitment procedures. The staff team has been in post since the home opened in October 2017 and the staff work well together.

Staff have a positive approach and are inspirational for children. They have aligned their responses to the individual behaviour management plans, which are kept under review. They are passionate about this restorative way of working because of the help it has brought to children.

Staff benefit hugely from the regular supervision, training and support available to them. The acting manager encourages reflective and research-based practice. This enables staff to be open and honest about their practice and encourages a safe learning environment. Staff have a wide range of opportunities available to promote their personal and professional development. Team meetings are regular and children are the focus of discussions.

Written documents are highly child-focused and incorporate young people's views. Staff's detailed recording provides the clinical team with valuable information. This also feeds in to the effective monitoring systems to check children's progress.

Feedback from children, parents and stakeholders is positive. There is good collaborative working with other agencies and professionals. The acting manager responds to and investigates any complaints in a timely manner.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1259631

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Howard Tennant

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Tina Ruffles, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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