

1263199

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to six children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for five children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 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: 21 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2023	Full	Good
01/03/2022	Full	Good
11/06/2019	Full	Good
11/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled living in the home. Three of the children have lived in the home for a long time and have developed a sense of permanence and belonging. Children spoke positively about living in the home and the support they receive from the people caring for them. Children are held in high regard in this home by the manager and staff.

Children make good progress from their starting points in many areas of their lives. For example, one child who previously had not attended school for over two years before moving in to the home, now attends full-time education. All the children living in the home are attending full-time educational provision.

Children's physical and emotional needs are met well within this home. Children receive weekly therapy from a therapist, who is an integral part of the team. There is effective partnership working between the therapist and staff. This supports staff to understand and develop their skills and knowledge to respond to children's behaviours using a trauma-informed approach.

Children are provided with a wide range of activities, such as drama school, martial arts, swimming, Guides, and attending the gym. This supports children's confidence and social skills. Furthermore, children are involved in the local community, which involves learning some social responsibility through fundraising and volunteering in a charity shop.

Staff support children to see people who are important to them. Staff will travel considerable distances to ensure that children have a positive time with their family. Staff also support children to build and repair relationships with family members.

The home is warm, welcoming and furnished to a good standard. Children's bedrooms are personalised. Any wear and tear is quickly repaired. Children are proud of the home and call it their 'family' home.

Care plans and review minutes for some children are not always received from placing authorities in a timely way. Health information on some children's files is missing. This means that care planning for children is not consistent, which impacts on the quality of care provided.

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

Children said that they feel safe, listened to and protected. Observations of interactions between staff and the children are warm, caring and nurturing. One child said, 'All staff are lovely, caring and kind.' This has helped children to develop trust in the people who care for them, which enables children to share any worries or concerns they may have.

All children respond to and benefit from the structured routines that are in place. For example, all children are in a good routine of getting up for school. Consistent boundaries in the home provide children with clear expectations of what is expected of them in relation to behaviour. Children benefit from this consistent care, which makes them feel safe.

The use of physical intervention in the home is rare. This is because staff use their positive relationships with children to de-escalate situations. When physical interventions are used, they are appropriate, and the staff involved provide a detailed report, which includes debriefs and evaluations.

Medication is stored safely. Records demonstrate that staff understand how to administer, check, and record all medication appropriately.

All staff are committed to their professional development and have completed the provider's mandatory safeguarding training so they can keep children safe. However, not all staff have completed self-harm training. This was identified as a risk for one child prior to coming to live in the home and which remains a high risk in accordance with the child's risk assessment.

In the manager's absence, there was a delay by the staff in reporting an allegation that a child had made to the local authority designated safeguarding officer. The manager did address this on their return and completed a lessons learned exercise.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has worked in the home for a long time and is dedicated and committed to positive outcomes for children. She has a child-centred ethos, which is shared by her deputy management and her senior managers.

Staff morale is high. The home has a consistent and long-standing staff team. This means that children receive reliable and stable care. Staff share the same child-centred passion as their managers. There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and staff have a sense of shared ownership of good practice.

The manager supports staff's development, and most staff have their childcare qualification. Children benefit from being cared for by experienced and qualified practitioners.

Staff receive regular, practice-based supervision, which supports them to understand their roles and the needs of children. Team meetings are well attended by staff. As well as a set agenda, staff also contribute to the agenda, which means that current issues and practice can be shared and addressed within the team.

Annual appraisals are in place, which review staff's skills and knowledge and identify future learning needs. This supports staff's ongoing professional development.

The managers and staff work well with other professionals. One professional said, 'I receive good communication, and staff are open and curious.'

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) In particular, ensure that all staff receive self-injurious training to meet and respond to children's individual risks.	24 April 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)) Specifically, ensure that the home has a copy of children's local authority care plans and children's review minutes in a timely manner. Furthermore, ensure that children's education, health and social care plans are on file.	24 April 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with information-sharing requirements relating to the children they care for. Specifically, refer to the local designated safeguarding lead in relation to any allegations made. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 14.7)

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: 1263199

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Natalie Bennett

Registered manager: Lisa Shoosmith

Inspector

Nicola Clements, Social Care Inspector

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