

1263199

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 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 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2022	Full	Good
11/06/2019	Full	Good
11/09/2018	Full	Good
20/03/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The majority of children have lived at this home for several years, which provides them with stability, security, and the opportunity to make sustainable progress. In general, children enjoy well-planned moves when they arrive at and move on from the home, in accordance with their plans.

Children enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with the staff. Staff are attentive and respond to children's individual needs to promote their health and well-being. Staff help children to understand their emotions and the importance of attending appointments to keep themselves healthy through direct-work sessions. One child said that their key workers and the manager 'deserve a pay rise', in recognition of how much support that they provide.

Most children attend the provider's own school. Their attendance is excellent, including those children who may not have attended school previously on a full timetable. One child left the school after completing their GCSEs and started a college course. The provider is actively seeking alternative options after the child decided that they no longer wish to attend.

The staff support children to see their families, including those who live a long way from their home areas. Some children have been able to enjoy overnight stays and holidays with their families to maintain these important relationships. Children's sense of identity and their cultural needs are understood and supported by the staff.

Children fully participate in the running of the home. Their wishes and feelings are listened and responded to wherever possible. They live in a home that is decorated with their input, and their bedrooms reflect their personalities and interests.

Some children's records, including incident reports, contain language that may be unhelpful to children when reading their records later in life.

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

The staff understand children's needs and vulnerabilities well. They provide consistent boundaries, which help children to feel safe. The staff build strong relationships with children. Children say that they can speak to any of the staff about any worries that they may have.

When children go missing, staff do all that they can to help the child to return safely to the home. The staff are professionally curious and share any information with other safeguarding agencies to highlight further concerns. They seek to work with placing authorities to reduce the likelihood of further missing events.

The manager identified when the team were no longer able to meet a child's needs safely. Despite every effort to work with the placing authority, the manager recognised that the home was not suitably located.

Due to the clear boundaries in place, consequences are rarely needed in response to children's behaviours. Restorative approaches are used to help children to understand when they make mistakes. The children are encouraged to participate and decide what consequences are appropriate to help them to take ownership for their actions. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort to manage children's behaviour when it puts them or others at risk of harm.

Any issues of bullying are dealt with promptly, using direct work to help children to understand that bullying is unacceptable. The registered manager has sought the input of the police community support officer to help children to understand the potential consequences of their actions.

Bedroom door alarms are used at night for all children on an ongoing basis. There are no identified individual or specific needs to justify their use. This practice intrudes on children's right to privacy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The team is led by a dedicated and experienced manager. She has a clear and aspirational vision about how the team needs to support children to do their best.

Staff are enthusiastic, caring and committed to the children. They feel well supported by the manager, and strive to help children to achieve their potential. One staff member said, 'It's an amazing place that changes children's lives. Staff work hard. [The registered manager] works incredibly hard and is a credit to the home.'

High-quality training is available to help staff to understand the individual needs of children. The manager is proactive in identifying resources and external specialist input to support the team's learning. Supervision is reflective and staff say that this helps them to develop professionally. The team is also supported by a therapist to understand and respond to children's needs.

The statement of purpose says that six children can live at the home. It also states that there is one member of staff who is awake and one who sleeps at the home each night. However, one of the children's bedrooms is being used by staff when they are sleeping overnight. There have also been rare occasions when, due to unexpected circumstances, there has been no waking night staff. On these occasions, the second member of staff has slept in a communal room downstairs. This means that children were unable to access all areas of their home.

External stakeholders, including parents, social workers and independent reviewing officers, say that the staff communicate with them well about children's progress. They say that staff are meeting children's needs well, and respond promptly to any queries that external professionals may have.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place so that she has clear oversight of children's progress and the quality of practice in the home. Independent monitoring reports do not consistently seek the views of stakeholders. However, the manager has addressed this with the service provider.

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— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, that any monitoring devices, including bedroom door alarms, are used only to safeguard children, when necessary, in response to a specifically identified need, are kept under review, and take into consideration children's privacy. Any staff accommodation arrangements should not prevent children from being able to access the living areas of their home.	12 March 2023
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose.	12 March 2023

Nothing in paragraph (5) or regulation 46 (review of premises) requires or authorises the registered person to contravene or not comply with—

any other provision of these regulations; or

any conditions in relation to the registration of the registered person under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000.
(Regulation 16 (1))

Specifically, the statement of purpose should clearly state the number and range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care. In conducting the home in accordance with the statement of purpose, children's bedrooms should not be used for staff sleeping arrangements at night.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is always recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child and that is non-stigmatising. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1263199

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Marcella Bird

Registered manager: Lisa Shoosmith

Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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