

# 2494551

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 run by a private company.

It offers care for up to seven children who may experience social and emotional difficulties, and who may have learning disabilities.

There were seven children living in the home, and five children were spoken with during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

### Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 17 October 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 17/10/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 30/11/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 17/01/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 27/11/2019      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Staff spend quality time with children and encourage them to share their views. This helps children to develop close and trusting relationships and make progress. Children's social workers said that children are making positive progress because of the care given by staff.

Staff have the appropriate skills to support the children's emotional needs. Staff work closely with the education and therapeutic team. This collaborative working helps staff to offer the children individualised, creative support, and this helps children to overcome any challenges that they may experience. The children can access direct therapeutic support. Furthermore, children are sensitively welcomed to the home. Children experience planned moves that help to reduce their anxieties.

Children attend school and are making progress. Staff experience some challenges when supporting all children to consistently attend education. Staff work closely with the children's teachers and social workers to help children and overcome the barriers to their learning.

Staff support children to develop their life and independence skills. Children enjoy spending time with their families and friends and doing hobbies, such as fishing and football. Children also enjoy a variety of activities with staff, including holidays to Blackpool, days out, and swimming. These opportunities help the children to develop their independence skills and improve their self-esteem.

Staff help children to be healthy and attend any necessary general and emergency health appointments. However, staff did not seek medical guidance following a time where a child declined to take their prescribed medication. This decision and absence of medical guidance could result in the child's condition getting worse.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of children's needs and risks. Staff have individual discussions with the children about their associated risks, such as internet safety, safe relationships, exploitation, and risks around smoking. This approach helps to develop the children's understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children's risk assessment and plans are updated after significant events. Additional risk assessments are created to provide specific guidance around self-injurious behaviours. The assessments provide staff with the necessary guidance for them to help children who are in crisis and reduce the risk to the child.

Staff use sensitive de-escalation techniques to support children during emotionally difficult times. This approach helps the children to understand potential triggers and

manage their own behaviours. This has led to a reduction of significant incidents for children. This view was shared by one social worker who highlighted the positive progress that a child has made because of the clear and consistent boundaries offered by staff.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff undertake room searches sensitively. Staff talk to the child so that they understand the reason for any searches. Any emerging concerns about the child's safety or welfare are responded to. Leaders and managers have safeguarding procedures in place, including for managing allegations. These procedures are followed, and this means that concerns about staff practice are shared and investigated.

When children go missing from the home, staff follow missing procedures. They proactively look for children and attempt to maintain contact with them. Staff support children when they return home and encourage them to talk about the events that have happened. This approach helps staff to understand why children went missing, and helps to develop children's relationships with the staff.

At times, staff physically hold children to prevent them from hurting themselves and others. These holds are used as a last resort, and children and staff are offered the opportunity to talk about the events. However, on occasions, there are gaps in records of the restraints, and this hinders leaders and managers having a clear picture of what has taken place. This does not ensure that children's welfare is promoted.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is run effectively by a permanent, suitably experienced and qualified registered manager. The manager understands the home, and uses monitoring and reviewing systems to support her oversight of the quality of care for children. The registered and deputy managers know the children and understand the children's plans. They provide staff with the guidance and support to progress children's plans. This helps children to achieve and make progress.

Leaders and managers have positive working relationships with staff. Staff said that they feel supported by managers and team members. Leaders and managers support staff to have regular team meetings and supervision sessions. These provide staff with the opportunity to reflect as a team and individually on the children's care and their own practice. This helps staff to offer children consistency of care.

Staff training is progressed in line with the home's policies, and staff access additional support to help them understand the children's individual needs. Staff work with the therapeutic team to develop their practice and provide care in line with the home's model of care.

Leaders and managers work collaboratively with professionals and communicate well with other agencies involved in the children's care. Overall feedback from professionals and the children's families was positive. Leaders and managers ensure that any

safeguarding notifications are sent to the children's social worker and Ofsted. This supports the independent oversight of significant events.

Leaders and managers have completed a review to look at the quality of care provided but have not included children's feedback or opinions. This prevents them having all the relevant information to improve the quality of care for children. From this review, the manager is aware that the home environment needs maintenance. Specifically, the children's bedrooms. The temperature in the bedrooms can feel uncomfortable, and damaged furniture does not make the bedrooms feel welcoming.

## 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, The 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       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(v)(viii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure the clear recording of measures used by staff, and any injuries to children.</p> | 30 August 2024 |
| <p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager must ensure that medical advice is sought in a timely manner to review children's medication needs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 30 August 2024 |

## **Recommendations**

- The registered person should take prompt action to ensure that children's bedrooms comply with health and safety requirements, and ensure that items are repaired in a timely manner and promote a domestic and homely environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should undertake a review of the quality of care provided in the home and include the feedback and opinions of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

## **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:** 2494551

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Richard Matthews

**Registered manager:** Kirstie Robinson

## Inspectors

Gina Lightfoot, Social Care Inspector  
Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector



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