

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 by a private company. It provides care for up to seven children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and may have learning disabilities.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 2025

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

Date of last inspection: 2 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/07/2024	Full	Good
17/10/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff spend quality time with the children. The four children spoken with during the inspection said that they enjoy spending time with staff and feel able to express their views. This has helped children to accept staff support and guidance, and they enjoy the activities that are made available to them. The children's voice is evident in key-work sessions, incident records, and children's meetings. This sensitive support helps children to feel valued.

Staff provide support for children to access education, which has led to improvements in some children's attendance. The staff work closely with educational professionals. This helps to ensure that children have alternative learning opportunities in place when they find attendance a challenge and there are barriers for their learning.

Staff help children to access health services, and their working relationships with the therapeutic clinical team are effective. This means that children can access direct therapeutic support, and staff benefit from the therapist's specialist advice and guidance. The professionals involved with the children recognise that they are making progress with their social and emotional development.

The children enjoy activities including football, horse riding and go-karting. They also enjoy spending time in the garden, playing basketball, and jumping on the trampoline. Staff help the children to spend time with people who are important to them. For some children, the support from the staff has helped them spend more time with significant others.

Since the last inspection, eight children have moved out of the home. The limited time some of the children spent in the home hindered their ability to form secure relationships. The decisions for children to move out of the home have been child centred, and their transitions have been managed sensitively.

The staff use visual aids to assist some children in understanding their daily care routine. One child's care plan has been adapted to recognise that they need to receive care from a consistent staff member at key points of the day, including their return home from school. Managers are confident that the staff are aware of the child's individualised care plan. However, gaps in records mean that managers cannot be sure that the child receives the consistent, personalised care during potentially heightened times.

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

The children feel able to speak with staff about their concerns. The staff know the children well and understand any known associated risks. The children have detailed risk assessments and safety plans, which are reviewed and updated in line with events.

Staff help the children understand their behaviours and offer support around personal safety and boundaries. For example, staff offered support to some children to help them understand the topic of consent. This sensitive support helps children understand how to keep themselves safe.

When children experience challenging times, the staff use de-escalation techniques to prevent incidents from escalating. Staff have sometimes needed to call for police assistance when de-escalation and physical holds have been unsuccessful with children.

Staff physically hold children only when necessary to protect the child and others. These incidents are recorded, reviewed and monitored by leaders and managers. They identify areas of development regarding staff practice and support the staff in accessing any additional training. Following any incidents involving children being held, staff make efforts to seek their views. They carefully consider the timing of these discussions. This enables children to discuss their experiences and understand the actions taken by the staff.

Staff use rewards to help promote positive behaviours and celebrate the children's achievements. One child was excited to receive a computer voucher for achieving an identified goal. The support from staff helps children understand their behaviour and work towards their goals.

Staff are proactive in supporting children when they go missing from the home. They actively search for children, and once they go out of sight, the staff follow the child's individualised missing-from-home procedure. Leaders and managers raise concerns with placing local authorities when risks escalate for children due to increased missing-from-home incidents.

The registered manager notifies Ofsted of significant events. However, on one occasion, there were disparities between the incident record and the recorded notification. Conflicting information means that it is challenging to have a clear account of the actions taken by staff to meet the welfare needs of the children.

Leaders and managers have reviewed and implemented lessons learned from medication errors. However, further medication errors have occurred. On these occasions, the errors have not caused any health implications for children. Staff take the appropriate action, including seeking medical advice and guidance.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are highly motivated and have strong oversight of the home. They consistently use monitoring systems to review patterns and trends in significant incidents. Furthermore, the registered manager carries out additional oversight to inform learning and practice in areas such as missing from home, use of physical holds, and developing staff skills. The registered manager's oversight is effective and helps foster an aspirational culture among the staff for the benefit of the children.

Newly appointed staff receive a well-structured, comprehensive and reflective induction. This assists them to understand their role and responsibility and provide high-quality care to children. Staff have access to a range of learning support and hold regular development discussions that help enhance their knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers are passionate about staff development, and their hard work and determination create a positive learning environment. The overarching feedback from staff is that they receive exceptional support from the leaders and managers. One member of staff said, 'Teamwork is at the heart of our team's culture.'

Staff regularly receive reflective supervision and consistently attend team meetings and clinical meetings. These child-centred meetings facilitate regular discussions about the children's needs. Furthermore, the clinical meetings equip staff with the strategies and techniques to manage difficult situations. This helps develop the quality of care for the children and supports their progress.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff clearly and confidently understand and recognise concerns about their practice. Leaders and managers take actions to address issues. They have effective links with local authority designated officers to ensure that allegations are managed effectively and steps are taken to safeguard children and maintain the quality of care.

Leaders and managers have made changes to the home so it presents as a relaxed and homely place for children to live. The home's decoration and the resources that are available for children have been carefully considered.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a child's plan provides staff with all relevant care information required to assist them in meeting the child's assessed needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person should ensure that prescribed medication is only administered in line with the prescribed instructions. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that records of significant events are clear and include evidence of the actions taken to ensure the children's welfare. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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

Rachel Moore, Social Care Inspector

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