

2496627

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 four children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2019.

The inspector spoke with all three of the children who were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 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 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Good
12/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in this home. They say that they are happy, feel safe and would not change anything about the home. There are trusting relationships between the staff and the children because the staff understand the needs of the children well. One social worker said, 'The risks have reduced for [name of child] since being in this home.' A parent said, '[Name of child] is the safest they have ever been'.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Damage was seen to one child's bedroom wall that had been repaired but not decorated to match the rest of the child's bedroom. The manager addressed this during the inspection when the inspector raised it. The children have laid a brick in the new extension to the home, which has contributed to their sense of belonging.

Children who move into and out of the home are supported well. Several children have returned home to live with family members because of the progress that they have made. Staff build positive relationships with these family members to support the child and their family during the child's move into their care. This helps to keep children safer. Due to the sense of belonging the staff have created for one child, that child travelled independently a considerable distance from their hometown to visit the staff.

Children's diverse needs are recognised, supported and celebrated. One child is supported to attend a local drama group to provide additional opportunities to express themselves. The staff support the children well when they are experiencing relationship difficulties with those who are important to them. This helps the children to feel that the staff genuinely care about them.

The children have regular meetings with the staff to share their views on the home. However, the outcome of the requests made by the children during these meetings are not consistently recorded in the minutes. This means children may be unaware of the reason why their requests could not be fulfilled.

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

Staff know the risks that the children face. The children's risk assessments are updated regularly. These contain clear strategies that support the staff to help them keep the children safer. When a serious incident happens in the home, the staff are quick to provide physical and emotional support to the child to minimise the risk of harm. This is because the staff know the children and their needs well. Children are supported to access specialist services to help them through these difficult times.

Bullying has been problematic in the home. However, the manager has taken steps to address this by supporting the children to have mediation meetings with each

other. Staff also help the children to understand how bullying can make a person feel to reduce the risk associated with this. Nevertheless, while the number of bullying incidents has reduced, the manager does not monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategies being used to tackle bullying and, for one child, the risk of bullying has increased.

Children rarely go missing from the home. Staff are clear about the individual plans for each child should they go missing, to help to improve the child's safety.

Consequences are applied infrequently. When they are used, the staff often give the children the opportunity to adopt a restorative approach, such as building new furniture, rather than having a financial penalty imposed on them. This helps the children to understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others.

Physical intervention is rare. When it is used, the staff usually guide the children rather than hold them. This is because of the level of trust the children have with staff and because the staff understand the children well.

The manager completes a risk assessment of the home environment. However, she has not updated this following a serious incident in the home, and she has not evaluated one potential hazard in a child's bedroom. This oversight hinders the staff's ability to keep the children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is committed to providing good-quality care for the children. She is supported well by the deputy manager. Together, they are enthusiastic about supporting the children to make progress across all aspects of their lives. All staff feel the manager is supportive and approachable.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. This has caused some disruption to the children. However, the manager has sought to reduce the effect of this. She has arranged farewell parties for the staff and the children who move on, which has provided the children with some closure. The manager has also evaluated the reasons for the high number of staff leaving. She has used the information from exit interviews and supervision sessions to identify areas to improve. New staff now receive better support during their induction process because of this.

The manager quickly addresses shortfalls in practice when staff fail to follow the provider's policies and procedures. The manager provides opportunities for the staff to improve their practice and learn from their mistakes. However, she is equally confident in taking disciplinary steps when necessary to help keep the children safe.

Supervision sessions are reflective but do not consistently take place in line with the provider's policy. When probation reviews or annual reviews are required, these tend to replace supervision sessions. This prevents staff from having focused safeguarding discussions about the children.

Staff team meetings are regular and reflect the needs of the children, the home and the staff. These meetings provide the staff with an opportunity to learn. However, the manager has missed an opportunity to assure herself that the staff are kept up to date on issues affecting their practice. The manager has overlooked that the minutes do not consistently identify who attends the meetings. Therefore, she cannot be assured that all the team are aware of a shortfall in practice that has been discussed. Furthermore, the staff do not consistently sign the minutes of the meeting. Therefore, the manager cannot be assured that the staff have read and understood the content.

The manager escalates requests for important documents that are required to help the staff to understand the children's current needs. However, these requests are not consistently tracked to ensure that they are escalated further when the initial escalation is unsuccessful.

A number of documents, including consequence logs, documents reflecting the work that has been completed with the children and behaviour support plans have not been signed or dated by the person completing the record. This prevents the manager from being assured that the processes are being completed in a timely manner, and they are being completed by the necessary individual.

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, 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the children's risk assessments of all potential ligature points in the home are identified and addressed on a regular basis and include the shower frames.	12 March 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all documents are signed and dated by the person making the entry. The registered person must ensure that all documents are an accurate reflection of the event being recorded, such as a list of attendees at staff team meetings, and the outcomes of children's requests at children's meetings.	12 March 2023

The registered person must ensure that supervision sessions take place in line with the provider's supervision policy.	
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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: 2496627

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Mark Jarvill

Registered manager: Danielle Cunningham

Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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