

2509298

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. Six children were living in the home at the time of the inspection, and four children were spoken with.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and Ofsted is currently checking that this person has the relevant capacity, experience, and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 August 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/08/2024	Full	Good
19/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/03/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by caring and attentive staff who prioritise the children's emotional well-being. Staff provide supportive and nurturing care and understand the needs and vulnerabilities of each child. Children enjoy natural and fun relationships with staff. Four children who were spoken with said they were 'happy' and that they like the staff.

The home is homely and inviting. Children sit and eat together with staff and peers, reflecting the home's welcoming atmosphere and the positive relationships that exist among children. Any concerns between children are quickly identified and managed, with children being helped to understand boundaries and expectations.

Children are making progress in all areas of their lives. Consistent staff support and ongoing access to a range of therapeutic professionals have helped children to achieve. All the children are attending full-time education. For some children, this is a significant achievement. There is regular communication with the children's schools. Staff make sure that children are prepared for the day ahead and ready to engage in learning.

Children spend quality time with people who are important to them. Staff advocate for this when necessary. This has resulted in children spending more time with their loved ones and forging stronger relationships. Children's families said that they feel genuinely supported and are confident that their children are 'safe,' 'happy' and 'thriving.' Families describe the home as a 'breath of fresh air.'

Children's views and wishes are listened to. There are processes in place to make sure that they are actively sought, reviewed, and responded to. Bright and colourful journey books contain photos of children taking part in numerous activities. Children participate in the wider community. They are active participants in local football clubs, enjoy cheerleading and regularly go horse riding.

Children's moves into and out of the home are carefully and effectively managed. The manager ensures that the right professionals are involved and are integral to discussions that inform any planning and preparation. Staff are committed to providing stability for children, including those with complex needs. Children develop a clear sense of permanence and belonging.

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

Children said that they feel safe and described the staff as one of their favourite aspects of living in the home. One child said, 'I know staff care about me and keep me safe.' Children display security in their interactions with staff and seek them out for comfort and hugs.

Staff work alongside a range of therapists, including psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists to support the individual needs of each child. Input from the internal safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour team and additional child-focused meetings give the opportunity for children's care, incidents, and any concerns to be regularly reviewed. Decisions and actions that are made are well thought out and help children to be safe and make progress.

There has been a very positive reduction in self-harming behaviour among children. There is professional curiosity and a nurturing approach among the staff. Staff review information and guidelines to find other avenues of support for children; this leads to positive changes. This has included introducing the use of deep-touch fidget toys.

The need for staff to physically intervene to keep children safe has decreased. When physical intervention is necessary, children are always given the opportunity to discuss the incident afterwards in a supportive and compassionate way. However, on one occasion, a staff member who had not completed the provider's required training was involved in physically holding a child. Additionally, staff have not always used provider-approved techniques to keep children safe. Actions such as giving children a playful 'fireman's lift' have been used to physically move children. This action was taken with best intention, but gives mixed messages to children. Some incident records do not reflect the full facts of the concerns, and the manager has identified that this needs to improve. Reporting and recording training has been carried out by staff to enhance their skills and abilities.

Risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans are regularly updated and support the individual needs of children. They direct staff to the best course of action and keep children safe. However, one risk assessment contained conflicting information. If this was implemented, it could cause potential distress to the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is newly appointed into the role and is continuing to develop her oversight of the home. She is ambitious for the children in her care and has quickly developed very positive relationships with children and staff. Children said that they were able to talk to the manager about any concerns. Staff speak very positively about the manager. They speak enthusiastically about 'refreshing changes' in the home and having more confidence in making decisions and contributing to the running of the home.

Staff meetings are held regularly and there is good attendance by the staff. The children are a focus of the meeting. There are discussions about safeguarding, and incidents are reviewed. The manager is keen to develop staff skills and competencies. Workshops and training sessions on relevant topics regularly take place during these meetings. Additionally, comprehensive, and supportive staff supervision sessions offer staff the opportunity to reflect on their role. New starters said that the induction process was very valuable, and they were well supported by the manager and staff.

The home is warm, homely, and welcoming, with the decoration and furnishings being in good order. The manager has reviewed a range of documents related to the health and safety of the home, ensuring that they are up to date, relevant and support the effective management of a safe and hazard-free home. The statement of purpose reflects what is offered in the home. This includes practice that is underpinned by a well-understood model of care. Regular audits are carried out to ensure that quality is maintained. The manager discusses any identified concerns with the relevant people.

Professionals are very pleased with the progress that children are making and the reduction in risk and incidents. Professionals said children were 'happy' and 'settled,' even when setbacks occur, and that staff did not 'give up on children.' They describe the home as 'warm' and 'welcoming.' There is good liaison with the local authority and ongoing communication with external and internal professionals. However, when incidents occur, they are not always reported to Ofsted. This reduces Ofsted's oversight and ability to ensure that appropriate actions are carried out to protect children.

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 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff who carry out physical interventions to keep children safe, use approved techniques and are appropriately trained. In addition, the registered person should ensure that the quality of reporting and recording of incidents improves and that children's risk assessments do not contain conflicting information.	28 November 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	28 November 2025

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: 2509298

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Jessica Hodgkinson

Inspectors

Jo Cansfield, Social Care Inspector

Cath Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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