

2509300

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 have experienced trauma.

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living in the home.

A suitably qualified and experienced manager is in post.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 1 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2023	Full	Good
12/04/2022	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, six children have moved on from the home in a planned way, and six children have moved into the home.

This is a home in which children's and staff's laughter can be heard throughout. Children are overwhelmingly positive about the care they receive. They say they love living in the home and describe it as being a 'family'.

Children enjoy positive, trusting and nurturing relationships with staff who know them well. Staff's care of children is creative, attuned and informed by research. Such care is enhancing children's life experiences, and all children are making significant progress from their individual starting points.

Children's moves into and out of the home are thoroughly planned. Before moving into the home, children meet with staff, visit the home and get to know the other children already living there. This thoughtful and child-focused approach allows children to settle into the home quickly and provides a base for children to make positive and sustained progress.

Children are doing exceptionally well with their education. Many of the children attend schools owned and operated by the provider. Staff work in close partnership with the educational professionals at these settings to ensure that children meet their academic potential. When children require additional support in school, members of staff provide this, which reduces any disruption to their education. As a result, children who previously were not in education now attend full time and are making excellent progress.

Three of the children in the home attend mainstream education. For these children, staff work closely with them and their schools to identify any barriers to learning. Where barriers are identified, staff seek to overcome them in the way a good parent would. For example, staff have arranged additional tutoring to help a child to achieve her desired grades.

Children are very well supported to maintain positive relationships with their family and the people who are important to them. Where appropriate, children regularly see their family and friends. Leaders and managers identify barriers to children seeing their family and provide the resources required to overcome them. This promotes children's sense of identity and shows them that their well-being is a priority.

Children are supported exceptionally well by staff to ensure that their health needs are met. Healthy diets and attendance at routine health appointments support good physical health. Staff promote children's emotional well-being through work with external professionals and the clinical team in the home. Children engage in weekly art therapy

sessions. These provide them with a safe and enjoyable space to express and increasingly understand themselves.

Children take part in a range of activities that they enjoy. Staff listen to children's interests and strive to identify opportunities to fulfil these. Children enjoy activities such as hiking, park runs, gymnastics, roller skating, art and gardening. One child has previously experienced a significant amount of social isolation. Since moving to the home, staff have supported them to engage in various activities which they thoroughly enjoy. This has included them starting kickboxing, which has enabled the child to make new friends and develop their confidence.

Children's moves from the home are exceptionally well planned. Staff work alongside children to support them in preparing for and moving out of the home. This ensures that moves occur in a way that meets children's needs. Excellent planning for children's moves helps them feel reassured and well supported during these crucial moments in their lives.

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

Children's welfare and safety are at the centre of all that staff do in the home. A combination of highly effective planning, positive and trusting relationships, and strong involvement of children ensures that they feel safe. Risks to children are identified early, and staff consistently manage them well. Children engage in creating and reviewing their own safety plans. As a result, children better understand how to stay safe.

Strategies to help children are grounded in research, and staff use a therapeutic and restorative approach with the children. The home's clinical team regularly supports staff to reflect on how they can best meet children's needs and keep them safe. This ensures that staff's practice is consistently exceptional. As a result, children are becoming safer, and incidents of children having to be held to keep them or others safe have considerably reduced.

Children feel happy and safe. As a result, they rarely go missing from the home. Since the last inspection, there has been one occasion when a child has gone missing. On that occasion, staff followed the child's plans and worked with the relevant professionals to ensure that the child was safely returned. Staff ensure that protocols are regularly reviewed and updated in all children's individual plans, despite such incidents being rare.

When incidents occur, the oversight by managers is of an excellent standard. Discussions about the incident with children and staff take place promptly, and managers provide a detailed reflective evaluation and ensure that any follow-up actions are carried out. This helps children to feel confident that they are safe and cared for.

Leaders and managers' responses to complaints and allegations are excellent. Leaders ensure that they share all the relevant information and work closely with external professionals. Children are always consulted and able to share their views. Follow-up work and protocols are carried out when needed. When shortfalls are identified, leaders

and managers take appropriate action. As a result, children feel valued and listened to, and their well-being is promoted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is inspirational, ambitious and child focused. She confidently advocates for children when needed, and speaks fondly of their experiences, progress and achievements. She has high aspirations for the children in her care and remains committed to ensuring that improvements are continually made. This outstanding practice supports the children to feel safe and helps them to thrive and make exceptional progress.

The manager is integral to planning children's care. As a result, she has developed excellent relationships with families and other agencies. Feedback received is extremely positive. One professional said, 'I am so thankful for the love and care they have for the child I work with.' Another said, 'The care that is given to [name of child] is really person centred, he is at the centre of all they do.'

Leaders and managers promote a strong culture of learning in the home. Oversight of the home is constant and ongoing. The manager has implemented various monitoring systems that allow effective oversight of the quality of care provided to children. This approach ensures that managers can quickly address any issues and that improvements are continually made to enhance children's experiences.

Leaders and managers take the well-being of their staff seriously. They carry out daily well-being walks and ensure that staff are supported through regular supervision sessions, team meetings and training. As a result, staff are highly motivated and say they love coming into work.

Leaders and managers monitor whether training is up to date. They have identified that three members of staff require updates in training relating to children who harm themselves, and one staff member requires an update in training relating to fire safety. Those staff members have been booked on the relevant training for April 2025; however, this is outside the home's own timescales as set out in its policies. The impact of this on children is low as those staff members have previously received such training, they never lone work, and they are supported by clear plans for children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should support staff to gain the skills and experience to enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

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: 2509300

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Louise Hyams

Inspectors

John Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Compliance Inspector

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