

2615494

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children. The home provides short-term care placements for an agreed period of assessment.

There has been no registered manager since 25 July 2025. A manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home, who was spoken with.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and they are yet to be assessed to ensure they have the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 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: 18 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2025	Full	Good
28/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
21/02/2023	Full	Good
02/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children move into the home on a planned and on an emergency basis. Assessments are undertaken over a twenty-eight-day period to help understand the child's needs and the type of home that would best meet these needs. Staff and managers quickly get to know children and develop positive relationships with them. Staff make sure children's bedrooms are ready for their arrival, including welcome baskets to help them feel comfortable.

Children's education is prioritised by staff and managers. Support from tutors helps to assess children's educational needs, which then aids with planning when children move to a new home. One child was supported to undertake their exams, which is positive when considering children's outcomes.

Children are encouraged to share their views and wishes. Staff talk to children about their needs and about important issues. Weekly catch ups with children help them to voice their wants and needs. Children undertake activities that are age appropriate, such as going to local theme parks, the farm and trips to different areas of the country with staff. One child went on holiday abroad for the first time with staff.

Care planning for children is well organised. Staff gain from receiving relevant plans from previous homes to help them understand children's needs and to prepare for when children are moving in. Managers and staff advocate for children and seek information from professionals. When children move out, staff plan this carefully and follow up with visits or calls to make sure they have settled well.

The home environment is welcoming and well presented. Children's bedrooms are personalised to them, including photographs of important people. There is lots of space for children to relax. When children leave the home, they are encouraged to create a special piece of artwork, which is displayed on the wall.

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

Staff have good relationships with children, and during incidents they use therapeutic approaches to help children. As a result, children are only held when it is necessary to keep them and staff safe. Following children being held, staff and managers are reflective about what happened, and any learning is implemented into support plans. Children are debriefed after they have been held, and staff support children to reflect on their feelings.

Staff are responsive to the needs of children and are observant to any changes in their behaviour. On occasion, staff have not accurately recorded the level of risk during incidents. In one case, the recording of incidents meant that key information was not fully shared with relevant professionals.

Children's risk assessments are individualised and updated when incidents occur. These include any learning identified, which helps staff to understand how best to support children in a crisis. Language used within records relating to children is nurturing. Staff use appropriate consequences to encourage positive behaviour and help children understand the reasons behind these actions.

When children go missing from the home, staff look for children, including searching known areas, contacting family and informing professionals. Managers review when children have been missing from home and have sought meetings with relevant professionals to consider frequent incidents. After one child moved out of the home, a reflective piece of work was undertaken with the staff team to consider future practice around children going missing.

Children are encouraged to tell staff and managers about their worries and any concerns. When allegations are made, managers respond promptly and involve external safeguarding professionals. Managers know the importance of informing children of the outcome of any complaints they have made, but children say they would like to have different ways of making complaints.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has left, and the home has been led by an acting manager, following a long handover period. There have been changes to the staff team. Staff say they have felt supported through this transition by managers.

The home is led by an experienced manager who has high aspirations for the children, staff and the home. The manager is reactive and responsive to what is going on in the home. They attend the home during significant incidents to support staff and manage incidents well to make sure children and staff are safe. They have good oversight of incidents and use reflective practice to learn from incidents.

The manager and staff communicate well with professionals to support children, including escalating concerns and advocating for children. The members of the management team have sought to improve gaining feedback since the last inspection. Positive feedback has been received from social workers, parents and staff. A parent shared, 'I felt we were working together to meet my child's needs.' A professional praised the staff for helping a child who had moved from far away to access local services to support with family time.

Staff are supported by regular supervision, team meetings and probationary periods. Managers undertake investigations where needed, which supports the practice of staff. Staff feel able to approach the management team, and experienced staff seek to support newer members of staff in their development. One member of staff said, 'I truly find it a pleasure coming to work, and I believe that what we are doing here is making a real difference to the future outcomes of the children we work with.'

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

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the homes policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2615494

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Lorna Walker, Social Care Inspector

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