

2709816

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to five children with complex needs and who may experience a range of social and emotional difficulties.

There are two other individually registered children's homes on the same grounds, and there is a school on the same site. The children living in the three children's homes attend the school.

All three children's homes had a monitoring visit from Ofsted on the same day. The school was not inspected during this visit.

The reason for the monitoring visits was because Ofsted has received information of concern about behaviour management at the other two homes. While the information does not directly relate to this home, Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit to be assured about the care of children, given the proximity of this home to the other two homes.

Inspection date: 2 February 2024

This monitoring visit

Five children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Children spoken to said they were happy living at the home. The home is lively, and children are engaged in different activities that they enjoy. For example, children go for swimming lessons and trampolining, and they enjoy playing different games.

Children are making some good progress relative to their starting points. For example, one child is managing their health needs better.

Five children living together can bring its challenges, as can living in close proximity to up to 12 other children who live in two neighbouring registered children's homes owned by the same provider. Staff provide good support to the children at this home as they develop peer relationships and learn to manage these safely and with kindness and respect.

Sometimes, staff need to physically intervene to keep children and others safe. Incidents involving restraint have been reduced in recent months, with one in December 2023 and one in January 2024, respectively. Restraint records are largely well detailed, and the reasons for the restraint are clearly explained. Records show that, when necessary, restraint is used proportionately by staff. Sometimes, children say that they are hurt during the restraint. Although children are spoken to after an incident, it is not always clear that what children have said during the restraint has been fully explored when they are calm. This is a missed opportunity for those not involved in the incident to understand more about a child's experience of the incident and to promote their safety.

When a child with a specific medical condition is restrained to keep them and others safe, staff now ensure that appropriate health checks are undertaken following such an incident. As a result, managers have met the requirement raised at the last full inspection.

Children have access to specialist therapeutic support. Therapists contribute to assessments and risk management plans as needed. However, on occasion, the information contained in these plans does not correlate with the information contained in risk management plans written by staff in the home. As a result, this creates some confusion for staff about which strategies they need to follow. As a result, when a child self-harms, staff have not always followed risk reduction strategies consistently.

An independent person visits the home monthly. They compile a report about the quality of care provided to children and make an evaluation about whether they believe the children are effectively safeguarded. The visitor consistently comes to the home during the school day. While they can sometimes see the children, this is dependent on whether they return to the home during the school day. This limits opportunities for the visitor to meet with children and for the children to get to know the visitor. In turn, this then limits the effectiveness of this independent oversight.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/07/2023	Full	Good

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 with 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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(ii)(iii)) In particular, ensure that when children raise concerns during a restraint incident, these are followed up more specifically afterwards when the child is calmer. In addition, review risk management plans to ensure that the guidance contained in them is consistent and that staff follow this guidance.	15 March 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2709816

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Graeme Cheyne

Registered manager: Jodie Whitehouse

Inspector

Jackie Line, Social Care Inspector

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