

2709816

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

This home has a school on the same site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this site.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

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 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Five children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. All five children were present and talked with the inspector. Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home. Children's moves into the home are well planned and include carefully managed introductions to other children and staff.

Staff sensitively support children with their health and well-being. They know children well and are creative in helping children to develop age-appropriate independence. For example, one child struggled with toileting, mainly during time on electronic devices. Staff used a variety of strategies and resources to support the child to take breaks. This support has contributed to the child now managing their own device time and toileting needs. This has contributed to the child's self-esteem improving, which has led to them making good progress.

Staff actively support and encourage children with their identity. They skilfully support children with issues around their gender, identity and sexuality. Staff seek specialised help when necessary and carry out research to meet the needs of the children they care for. As a result, children can confidently explore and express their gender and sexual identity.

Children have access to specialist therapeutic support that helps with their complex needs. Therapy consultations and reflective discussions are used well and are effective in improving staff practice. Therapists contribute to assessments and risk management plans as needed. This promotes effective quality of care for children.

Staff are provided with a wide range of training and research that informs their practice. This enables them to better understand the reasons behind some of the children's behaviours and to provide a nurturing environment in which children thrive. As a result, children are supported with emotional regulation, which contributes to them managing their emotions positively.

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

All children say they feel safe and cared for by the managers and staff. There are positive, nurturing and affectionate relationships between children, staff and managers. The relationships between staff and children contribute to children's sense of security.

Children know how to make a complaint and identify trusted adults they can share their worries with. The home's children's guide and complaints policy are accessible in all areas of the home for children. On the extremely rare occasions children do complain, managers take a proactive response, ensuring that children's welfare and safety are at the centre of safeguarding investigations. This means children know their views matter

and their concerns are taken seriously. The manager takes the same approach to managing complaints from external agencies.

Staff and managers understand the risks to each child and there are suitable risk management plans in place to address these. Risk management plans and risk assessments for children are clear and individualised. Staff take a proactive approach to implementing and responding to the guidance and actions set out in these plans.

Staff and managers use restorative approaches to promote positive behaviours with children. Staff use de-escalation techniques and alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of each child. Restraint is used only as a last resort. The manager reviews all incidents and discusses these with staff and children afterwards. This ensures that children's views are considered, and that staff practice is reviewed. However, the manager did miss an opportunity to appropriately explore an injury a child during a restraint. This practice could leave children vulnerable to harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An organised and child-centred manager leads the home. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager. The responsible individual recently resigned from the role, which is now being recruited for. Senior leaders also have significant involvement, offering effective support to managers and oversight of the home. This has contributed to a positive home environment where children can thrive and make progress.

Children are cared for by a motivated and dedicated team with a mix of skills. This helps children build positive relationships with staff, leading to significant progress. Each child is paired with a worker who understands their specific needs. This approach has helped children to express themselves, manage their emotions and behave more positively. This practice is effective in supporting children to achieve positive outcomes.

The staff are passionate and well supported through regular supervision and training. New staff go through a clear and effective induction process. Most staff hold a level 3 diploma and complete various training programmes to meet the needs of each child. Because of this, children get excellent care from skilled and knowledgeable staff who are fully committed to children's progress.

The managers maintain constant oversight of the home, using a range of review and monitoring systems. These effective systems provide a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. This means that managers can quickly address issues and plan developments and improvements across the home.

External professionals praise the staff and managers for the quality of care and support they provide to 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(vii)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that when children sustain injuries during an incident, this is thoroughly investigated, and the local authority and other relevant professionals are notified.	24 January 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: 2709816

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: Jodie Whitehouse

Inspector

Nateisha Cardoza-Evans, Social Care Inspector

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