

2494551

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

There is a manager in post who was registered with Ofsted in November 2018.

Inspection dates: 1 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: This is the first full inspection of the children's home since registration.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has been in residence since the home was registered with Ofsted in November 2018. The carefully planned move strengthened the child's ability to settle in quickly and build some very positive relationships with the staff. The staff show affection and they role model what a healthy and safe relationship should look like. This helps the child to feel safe enough to share her thoughts and feelings. Similarly, the advice and guidance that the staff offer are helping the child to focus on positive and non-exploitative experiences. New children and young people will be moving to the home soon. They have been matched to the existing child, who has been involved in appropriate introductions. This will help all of the children and young people to feel involved and to settle quickly.

The child's excellent school attendance is supported by the staff team. The child's progressive attainment levels are celebrated and rewarded. The communication between the care and teaching staff supports the child's learning and achievements and helps to minimise any learning barriers. Although there are clear educational developments, the child does not have an education, health and care plan. The registered manager continues to pursue this and other educational matters with the local authority, so the provider can assure themselves that the child is receiving the right level of educational support.

The child is occupied with activities that provide fun and enrichment, such as having beauty sessions, going to the cinema, playing games, having trips out and going to the gym. The staff encourage the child to attend youth and sports clubs so she can develop appropriate peer relationships. Contact with family is facilitated well by the staff team, which keeps the child connected to family members and promotes her emotional needs and identity.

The child's health and well-being are significantly enhanced by clear routines and boundaries that provide a good daily structure. The child is engaging in discussions with the staff about healthy living and risky behaviours. Consequently, there has been a marked decline in her engagement in unhealthy activities that could have a detrimental impact on future outcomes. The child's attendance at routine health appointments supports the continued monitoring of her health. Access to the in-house clinical support is available, should it be needed, for staff and the child.

The home provides high-quality, comfortable accommodation. A professional said, 'It's a lovely house.' The child's individualised bedroom reflects her personal style. There are enough communal areas that offer the space for children and young people to flourish. The environment is enhanced by the remedial action taken to remove the locks on doors to the kitchen and some of the downstairs rooms. This allows the children and young people to access all appropriate areas of the home.

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

The staff team has a good understanding of the child's risks, helping the child to become significantly safer. The child feels safe and this is bolstered by the clear boundaries and positive relationships with the staff, which promote open and honest discussions about some inappropriate and risky behaviours. This gives the child a clear message that the staff are concerned for her safety and welfare, and will take action if she is in unsafe situations. The child's individualised, detailed risk assessments support safe care practices, such as controlling and monitoring her use of mobile phone, iPads, social media and her free time in the community. At times, certain risky behaviours have led to restrictions but the child has worked towards reducing these behaviours so that the restrictions can be lifted. This has presented a fine balance between protecting the child and promoting the right to freedom of movement.

The staff have a good knowledge of the harmful risks associated with county lines, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. The staff protect the child from these risks through honest and challenging discussions and awareness raising, which are starting to have some impact. There have been no incidents of missing from care, which is keeping the child safe from the known risks. When the child has left the home without authority, staff have followed her and kept her in sight. A missing-from-care protocol and strategies are in place if the child goes missing. The manager has maintained positive links with the police, which enables information sharing and a coordinated approach in the event of any missing incidents.

The staff have a coherent and intuitive understanding of the child's behaviours and moods because they have taken the time to get to know her. They use the child's bespoke behaviour-support strategies to help to de-escalate challenging behaviours and reward positive behaviours. This ensures that the use of physical intervention remains extremely rare. The child is learning to better regulate her emotions. She shows remorse and empathy, and is learning about the impact of her behaviours on other people's feelings. Staff are aware of the child's capacity to outwit them at times, and strive to be alert and keep one step ahead. However, on occasions, avoidable incidents have happened, and staff have learned lessons and improved their practice to ensure that there are no repeated incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has a good understanding of the child's needs and risks. He provides strong and stable management for the team and he is ably supported by the deputy. Together, and with support from the management team, they drive a culture of high aspiration for children and young people, and create an inclusive and supportive environment for the staff team. Consequently, the staff's morale is good.

The registered manager is approachable and committed to the staff's learning and development. He promotes a safe learning culture and leads by example. Some staff

have ceased employment at the home and they have been replaced by new staff who are settling into their roles. Positive peer camaraderie, informal support, guidance and regular supervision underpin the practice of the home's motivated staff team. The staff have opportunities to reflect on their practice, learn lessons and demonstrate the capacity to improve their practice. Regular team meetings and daily handovers feature the child and promote consistent and safe care practices. However, not all staff consistently sign to confirm that they have read the minutes following team meetings. This does not provide a robust assurance that all staff have a shared understanding of the management's direction and expectations, and have ownership of their roles and responsibilities.

The manager understands the home's strengths and areas for development. He makes effective use of the good external monitoring systems, as well as the internal systems, so that the quality of care in the home improves. Although the recent regulation 45 review report tracks the home's progress so far and includes clear action planning, it does not contain feedback, in particular from the placing authority and the staff. The shortfall has no negative impact on the child's outcomes, but makes it unclear how the views of other people influence and improve the services for children and young people.

The relationships formed between the home and other professionals and agencies promote multi-agency working and keep the manager and staff team up to date with local intelligence. The manager appropriately challenges the local authority so that the child's needs are met in full accordance with her plans.

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, 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 system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(2)(5))	27/09/2019

Recommendations

- Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Specifically, to ensure that all staff sign the team meeting minutes to confirm that they have read and understood the information and action points, to support their practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 2494551

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Registered provider address: Witherslack Group, Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth
LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Marcella Bird

Registered manager: David Fairclough

Inspector

Jacqueline Malcolm: social care inspector

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