

1247559

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides a therapeutically managed facility to meet the nurturing, health, social, emotional and mental health needs of up to six children aged seven to 17 of either sex who are unable to live in a family context.

The home's manager was registered in June 2021.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 3 December 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 July 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be 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: 29 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
30/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children at this home are making good progress. Some make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff were observed to provide care in a calm and nurturing manner. This helps children to develop trust. They feel assured that the adults caring for them will meet their needs. Children enjoy spending time with staff. They were observed to seek adult attention in positive ways.

Children's individual interests and hobbies are promoted. One child is a talented basketball player and has joined a local team. Another is due to start swimming lessons to learn to swim.

Most children were not in full-time education before they came to the home. Some had not attended for a considerable time. All five children are now in full-time education and attend without issue. This promotes their academic progress. It also helps children embed positive daily routines and gives them opportunities to make friends and learn social skills.

The quantity and quality of direct work with children is good. Work done clearly links to their placement plans and outcomes. Work is also done on an ad hoc basis when incidents or issues arise. This work has a positive impact on children's placement outcomes and their day-to-day lives.

The home's therapist visits regularly and works with each child individually. Children were observed to interact well with the therapist, seeking her out and showing affection towards her. This promotes children's mental health and emotional well-being.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There has been one very serious safeguarding incident. This has had an impact on the inspection judgement in this area. A child put himself and others at extreme risk. He has also been criminalised for committing offences. The incident was preventable. Staff made some errors which enabled the child to put himself in this situation. Requirements are made under regulation 12 to reflect this shortfall.

Children said that they mostly had positive relationships with one another. Two children raised the issue of bullying. They stated that, at times, they felt afraid of other children. They also said that there had been incidents where a child had hit out at them. Whilst children are risk assessed for bullying, and work is done with

them around this issue, it has not been completely resolved or mitigated. A further requirement is made under regulation 12 in relation to this.

There is good evidence of children's risks reducing from their starting points. In particular, children's risks in relation to gangs, sexual exploitation and going missing are reducing. Direct work helps to ensure that children know how to keep themselves safe.

Children's risk assessments are clear, accurate and kept up to date. Staff spoken to could identify children's risks and describe how they manage them.

Restrictive physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Records show that staff use a range of de-escalation techniques as described in children's positive behaviour support plans. This helps children to co-regulate and avoid potential physical interventions.

There have been several allegations made against staff. The manager has good knowledge of the allegations management procedure and uses this effectively. The designated officer was consulted as part of this inspection and had no concerns about allegations management at the home.

There has been one medication error. Managers took effective action to address this and prevent recurrence. There was no detrimental impact on the child involved.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has undergone a period of transition from a short-term assessment unit to a medium/long-term placement unit. The transition has been well managed. Training and support has been provided for staff to support them in their changing role.

Management arrangements for the home are good. There is a registered manager in post who is supported by a strong deputy. The responsible individual and area manager are also frequent visitors to the home. They provide support, advice and undertake monitoring and quality assurance activities.

The manager has a good grasp of the day-to-day running of the home. He understands its strengths and weaknesses. Staff find him supportive and approachable. He has forged strong links with the children, who often choose to spend time with him.

Joined-up working with external agencies is an integral part of the support offered to children. This means that children get what they need from all the different people involved in their lives. One example of this was observed when the home's therapist supported a child with a visit by his social worker.

Managers make good decisions about who comes to live in the home. They also understand the extent to which children make progress. Where progress falters,

managers take action to address this. Managers have made difficult decisions about ending children's placements after considering the impact a child may have on the whole group.

Records are well organised. They are detailed and give a clear account of the children's lives. The manager has good oversight of children's records. This ensures that they are accurate, evaluated and kept up to date.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(iv)(v)(b))</p>	4 August 2021

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: 1247559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Marcella Bird

Registered manager: David Beavers

Inspector

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector

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