

2494551

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. It provides care for up to seven children with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities. There were five children living at the home at the time of this inspection.

The registered manager left in December 2022. The home has been overseen by the manager from another provision, with support from the deputy manager and senior managers. A new manager has been appointed.

Inspection date: 8 February 2023

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

A more consistent staff team has enabled children to build positive relationships. There is a relaxed atmosphere in the house. The staff know the children's likes and routines and provide support that reflects each child's preferences.

Children are supported to achieve educationally. Staff ensure there is daily communication with schools. Before children return to the home, staff know how the school day has gone. This helps children to receive consistent care from the adults around them, and staff tailor the support accordingly.

Each child has achievable targets, and positive behaviour is rewarded. Children spend time with the people that are important to them. When arrangements for children to spend time with family have not progressed, the staff are proactive in overcoming obstacles to family time.

The safety of children

Staff know what might cause children to become unsettled and support them to manage their emotions. There has been a reduction in the need to hold children. Staff use their skills to de-escalate situations. When restraint has been used, children have an opportunity to talk about what has happened afterwards. Incidents are evaluated so that the manager and staff are able to develop de-escalation techniques further.

Children's risks are clearly identified in their individualised risk assessments. Staff know how to help children to manage risks, and the systems in place to ensure that this knowledge is current are effective. The children are involved in writing their plans, and this helps them to understand rules and boundaries and also how staff will support them.

There has been a reduction in children going missing. The steps that staff take if this happens are tailored to each child's needs and vulnerabilities. Following an isolated incident when a staff member did not follow a child's plan, the process has been evaluated and strengthened to ensure that it is not repeated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

There is currently no registered manager, and there have been some changes in the senior management team. The interim management arrangements have minimised the impact of these changes on the children.

The provider has taken steps to address the shortfalls identified in the previous inspection. More effective systems for monitoring staff's training needs and ensuring that staff are aware of any updates to children's plans have been developed.

Staff receive regular, reflective supervision and report that this is beneficial. The performance of new staff is monitored, and if required, additional support provided to improve the quality of their practice. Team meetings are used as a further opportunity for staff to refresh their understanding of how to respond to children if they are struggling to manage their emotions.

Allegations against staff are reported to relevant agencies, including the inspectorate. The lessons learned from incidents are used to improve practice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/01/2022	Full	Good
27/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/05/2019	Full	Good

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2494551

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Graeme Cheyne

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Laura Grundy, Social Care Inspector

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