

1159763

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 and managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to eight children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

Seven children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 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: 30 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/12/2022	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
15/10/2019	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children living in the home are supported by the registered manager and staff to build secure and trusting relationships with them. The staff enjoy spending time with the children and building positive memories with them. The staff encourage the children to have fun through shared activities such as mealtimes, baking, singing, and getting dressed up in fancy dress for events such as World Book Day. In addition, the children are encouraged to take part in a range of activities in the community that align with their individual interests. This helps the children to develop new skills, build support networks outside of the home and support them to develop their self-esteem.

The children living in the home make good progress due to the care and support provided by the staff. The children are in good physical health and are supported by the staff to attend routine health appointments, eat a balanced diet, and take part in exercise. The staff work well with the on-site clinical team and external professionals to assist the children in making progress with their emotional well-being. One child's social worker described the child as being 'a different' child, who is now able to interact with adults and peers and wants to take part in activities.

All the children attend the on-site school and have full attendance. The children have personalised education plans that help them to make progress from their starting points. One parent said that their child has made 'lots of progress since living in the home' and has 'come out of their shell, takes part in activities and is doing well in education'. This parent describes the home as being 'the best place' for their child due to the support and help that the staff give to their child. The staff support the children to maintain relationships with those that matter the most to them through promoting family time and friendships. This helps to promote the children's sense of identity and their relationships with family members and friends.

Since the last full inspection, seven children have been welcomed into the home and eight children have moved on. The registered manager and staff manage these transitions sensitively to make them a positive experience for children. When children are struggling to settle into the home, the registered manager and staff are proactive and work with the clinical team and placing social workers to understand what needs to be done to help the child.

Following a child moving from the home in an unplanned way, leaders and managers conduct a learning review of the child's time at the home. This provides a safe reflective space for the management team and staff to learn and put in place measures to reduce the risk of children leaving in an unplanned way in the future.

The children's rights are respected and promoted. The staff support the children to share their views through formal and informal conversations with the children. The

children are informed of their rights and entitlements through the home's Children's Guide. However, the Children's Guide contains some inaccuracies about how children can make a complaint. The registered manager has acknowledged this and is committed to revising the Children's Guide.

The registered manager and staff provide a safe, spacious, comfortable, and clean home for the children which is decorated to a high standard. Each child's bedroom is unique and reflects their interests and personalities. There are pictures of the children on display in the communal areas of the home. The home looks and feels like a family home for children.

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

Parents and external professionals have confidence in the staff's ability to keep the children living in the home safe. The children's individual plans and risk assessments identify the children's individual needs and vulnerabilities and support staff to know what actions to take to manage risks. The plans are reviewed by the registered manager, the staff, and the on-site clinical team, and are updated accordingly. This ensures that the children's plans accurately reflect their needs and vulnerabilities.

Children are held by staff as a last resort and only to keep the child and others safe. When children are held by the staff, the staff employ the least restrictive hold. Records where a child has been held are detailed and describe how the staff have helped to keep the child safe. There is good management oversight of these records and debriefs are arranged for both the child and staff involved. This promotes the child's welfare, supports learning, and helps to repair the relationship between the staff and the child. In addition, a monthly analysis of the times children are held takes place. This supports the manager to have good oversight of the use of holds and supports learning and reduction of times children are held.

The home is well organised and there are clear routines and boundaries in place for the children. This helps to provide a predictable, stable, and safe environment for the children. The staff promote positive behaviour through positive role modelling, respect, and understanding of the children's needs. The children's bespoke behaviour support plans help staff understand how to promote an environment that supports positive behaviour and relationships in the home. The staff also encourage positive behaviour by giving the children regular praise and incentives.

The staff know what to do when children are missing from care. Each child has an individual missing-from-home plan which helps the staff and external professionals to secure the safe return of the child home. When children go missing from the home, independent return home interviews are offered to them. In addition, staff have conversations with the children on their return home to help to understand the reasons for the child going missing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced registered manager. The registered manager and his team leaders work closely together and are passionate about promoting positive outcomes for children. They are ambitious for children and have high standards of themselves and their staff.

The registered manager is supported by the responsible individual who is visible in the home and knows the children well. The registered manager, responsible individual and team leaders have a good oversight of staff practice by being present in the home and undertaking regular audits. Leaders promote a reflective environment where the staff feel safe to develop and learn.

Leaders and managers know and understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and take decisive action to remedy any shortfalls identified. They value the external monitoring undertaken by the independent visitor and respond quickly to any shortfalls. In addition, the shortfalls identified at the last inspection have been acted on.

Staff enjoy working in the home and feel supported by the leadership team. They value regular practice-based supervision, have access to relevant training and can participate in the development of the service through team meetings. This helps the staff to meet the needs of the children living in the home, supports them to feel valued and promotes the staff's development and emotional well-being. Feedback from parents and placing social workers is overwhelmingly positive in respect of the staff's ability to meet the needs of the children living in the home.

The registered manager keeps the home's statement of purpose under review and regularly notifies the regulator of any changes. However, the current statement of purpose has a minor inaccuracy in regard to the children being involved in staff recruitment. Although this has had no impact on the children living in the home, this weakens transparency.

The registered manager notifies the regulator of any serious incidents in the home. This allows the regulator to assess the safety of the children living in the home.

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
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document; (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(c))</p>	1 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's Statement of Purpose is child focused and accurate regarding the recruitment of staff for the home ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

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: 1159763

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Darrell Elsinor

Registered manager: Adam Nicholls

Inspector

Shirin Khan
Social Care Inspector

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