

# 1244160

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is one of several privately run children's homes in the Witherslack group and provides care for up to eight children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager has been in post since March 2018 and was registered by Ofsted in November 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 11 to 12 December 2018

**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:** 14 December 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/05/2017	Full	Good

## 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>11: The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) mutual respect and trust;</li> <li>(b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</li> <li>(c) positive responses to other children and adults.</li> </ul> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(a)(xi))</p> <p>This particularly refers to staff de-escalating situations that result in physical restraint more quickly and effectively.</p>	29/03/2019

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are eight children living in this children's home. All of them attend school regularly and all are making good progress. The registered manager and the staff prioritise children's academic and social education.

Children make good progress in terms of their emotional and social development. The home's mental health practitioner identifies which areas children need help with and provides clear guidance as to how staff can best support them. As a result, children are gaining in confidence and starting to understand their own identity.

The children are actively involved in creating safe and personalised spaces to live in. A local artist is helping children to develop a sense of ownership and pride in their own rooms. In one example, patience and creativity have led to a child sleeping in their own bed after many years of not being able to. Additionally, individualised 'pods' created for children in the living area provide each child with their own safe and secure space within the communal areas of the home.

The staff encourage children to be more physically active through a simple but effective reward system. Staff tailor social activities to the children's strengths, interests and their identified goals, for example, taking a child's love of role playing console games and developing this into playing alongside their peers in the offline world.

Children who have a chance to be reunited with their family are supported well. When it is safe to do so, the staff facilitate visits to family and encourage in a respectful way children's desire to go home.

Children who move on do so at an appropriate pace and with sensitive support from key members of staff. The registered manager and the staff understand the importance of transitions and plan effectively to make them as smooth as possible.

The staff recognise culture and identity in all their forms and support children to be confident in who they are as they get older.

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

When staff physically restrain children, they usually do so to avoid injury or damage and do so for the shortest possible length of time. The frequency of these interventions is decreasing, and a restraint reduction strategy is starting to have positive results. However, there are too many times when the staff restrain children unnecessarily. The whole team needs to develop a deeper understanding of triggers and positive responses to behaviour linked to past trauma. The building blocks for achieving this are in place, but a consolidated effort is required to put these into effect over the coming months.

Children know that there are consequences when their actions are unacceptable. These include reparation whenever possible and are mostly proportionate to the misdemeanour. On occasion, financial consequences for damage last too long and lose their impact and effectiveness.

The registered manager and the regional manager have a good understanding of risk and make intelligent decisions about which children should come and live at the home. Children are cared for by staff who are thoroughly and safely vetted. When there are staff shortages, shifts are covered by staff from within the group, so that, as much as possible, children are familiar with the adults caring for them.

When allegations and complaints are made, these are referred to the appropriate agencies in a timely way and they are investigated thoroughly. On a small number of occasions when staff responded inappropriately to the children's behaviour, senior leaders took decisive action, which included making formal apologies to children.

The registered manager and the whole team evaluate risk in a dynamic way and change the way that they work with children accordingly. For example, managers regularly review the use of bedroom door sensors to ensure that, when they are used, it is proportionate and necessary.

Children very rarely go missing because they like living at this home. The staff know what to do if a child were to go missing. Relationships with the local police are well maintained to support a quick response if required.

The senior leadership team is very aware of exploitation online, county lines and other risks from the wider community. The staff are well prepared in the event of these issues arising at the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last full inspection, there have been several changes to the staff team, including the registered manager. This period of change is coming to an end, as the senior leadership team has methodically recruited permanent staff to all key positions.

The new registered manager has received good support from the whole senior team, especially the regional manager. The new registered manager has used his skills to develop the fabric of the building and to improve core management functions.

The senior leaders know the children and the home well and have a clear understanding of the areas that require further development. This is underpinned by a realistic business plan and a primary commitment to helping children achieve the best possible outcomes.

The staff are suitably qualified and trained in fundamental areas. New staff have been carefully recruited. The whole staff group shares the company's ethos and values. This is a good basis for moulding the team into one that has a deeper understanding of the holistic needs of the children. There is a commitment to shifting the emphasis to the principles of trauma-informed practice, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. A good mix of ages, skills and experience within the staff team gives children a wide choice of significant adults to go to.

A team leader has embraced the additional responsibility of developing tracking systems that add to the management oversight of the home. This, coupled with the work of the mental health practitioner, has the potential to further strengthen care planning and further improve outcomes for children.

Other professionals spoke highly of the level of commitment and communication that they receive from staff and about how they can see children making progress.

## **Information about this inspection**

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. The inspector 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 inspector has 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:** 1244160

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Ltd

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

**Responsible individual:** Howard Tennant

**Registered manager:** Dean Fuller

## Inspector

Steve Lowe, Her Majesty's Inspector

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