

1244160

Witherslack Group Ltd

Monitoring visit

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 manager was registered by Ofsted in November 2018.

Inspection date: 16 December 2019

This monitoring visit

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the home's compliance with the notice restricting accommodation and to consider the impact of any action taken by leaders and managers since the last monitoring visit on 20 November 2019.

Inspectors initially undertook a monitoring visit on 20 November 2019 in response to a notification relating to a serious incident which occurred in the home. This involved two children seriously assaulting a younger child who also lived at the home and a staff member. This resulted in the arrest of the two children who perpetrated the assault by the police. The victim and staff member who were assaulted required treatment at hospital for their injuries. The incident remains under investigation by the police.

The restriction notice was issued on 25 November 2019. Ofsted's view was that there was a risk to children if further children were admitted to the home. Furthermore, the restriction would enable leaders and managers time to conduct a full review of the incident on 13 November 2019, to gain a full understanding of the incident and actions taken, to identify any shortfalls and to take prompt action to rectify these.

At this monitoring visit, inspectors looked at the progress leaders have made since the monitoring visit on 20 November 2019. Leaders and managers confirmed that a

'lessons learned review' had been undertaken and provided the inspectors with further evidence to outline the action they had taken in response to the incident.

On review of this information, inspectors identified further gaps, omissions and inconsistencies. Leaders and managers were still unable to provide a comprehensive overview of and sequence of events surrounding the incident, for example how the injured child and staff member were taken to hospital to receive treatment, and what occurred during the 45-minute period during which the two children who perpetrated the assault left the home. Two members of staff had followed the children and kept them in sight until their arrest by the police.

Leaders and managers provided a 'staff de-brief incident review' as evidence of the analysis of the incident. This outlined a debriefing session with some staff who were involved in the incident, which was undertaken by the behavioural team. The review failed to evaluate how decisions had been made by leaders and managers throughout the day or analyse the effectiveness of actions taken. This included the quality of the children's risk assessments and the timeliness of their review following the incident.

Inspectors found that the records of debriefs with the children did not include the date when these took place or the author of the account. The home's daily log and visitors' book omitted key information about visitors to the home, who included the paramedics and the police who attended the home to take statements from staff.

Leaders and managers produced an action plan. This did not record who completed it or on what date it was written. Leaders and managers confirmed that this was drawn up after receipt of the draft copy of the monitoring report for the visit carried out on 20 November 2019. While the plan identified some actions to address the requirements, it did not include the weaknesses in practice in relation to this incident or provide timescales for action or measures to review and assess its effectiveness.

The home was inspected on 9 September 2019 when one requirement and three recommendations were made. A further three requirements were made following the monitoring visit on 20 November 2019. These were not specifically looked at during this monitoring visit and will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

Due to the serious concerns and lack of immediate action taken by leaders and managers, the requirement made under the protection of children standard is now subject to a compliance notice. The restriction notice will remain in place, due to concerns about the risk of harm should a further child be admitted to the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/10/2019	Full	Good
11/12/2018	Full	Good
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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>(Regulation 5(a))</p>	12/01/2020
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.</p> <p>*(Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi))</p>	12/01/2020

<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(c)(h))</p>	<p>12/01/2020</p>
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*This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
In particular, ensure that impact assessments are completed and sufficient consideration is given to assessing the risks associated with children coming to live at the home in relation to the risks associated with children already living at the home.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1244160

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Howard Tennant

Registered manager: Dean Fuller

Inspectors

Joe Davys, social care inspector

Teri Peck, regulatory inspection manager

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