

# 2509300

**Witherslack Group Ltd**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This privately owned home offers care for up to seven children. These children may have faced adverse childhood experiences, resulting in trauma.

There is currently no registered manager in post.

**Inspection date:** 30 July 2020

## **This monitoring visit**

On 30 July 2020, Ofsted completed a monitoring inspection of the home in response to safeguarding concerns and incidents that occurred at the home. The inspector identified a significant number of shortfalls.

Managers fail to accurately assess the risks that children face or devise effective plans to manage these risks. On 23 July 2020, a child made a serious allegation that he had suffered harm by another child during an outing. Ofsted was not notified of this incident until 27 July 2020. Prior to the outing, managers and staff failed to risk assess the activity or consider how they would keep children safe.

Processes put in place to protect children are not effective. Staff fail to supervise children effectively in line with their risk assessments. Consequently, children have been exposed to the risk of harm.

Managers fail to share information with each other. This home is next door to another home run by the same company. Managers made the decision to allow children from both homes to spend time together; this has been actively encouraged by keeping the adjoining garden gates open. Managers do not consider the risks that children may present to one another. Known risks are not shared across the two homes and the mixing of children is not assessed. This has placed children at risk.

Managers fail to share key information with the staff team. The manager has recently obtained significant information in regard to one child. This has not been shared with the wider staff team and has not been incorporated into the child's risk assessment. This is due to concerns that the information may upset the staff or have an impact on their ability to work with the child. This means that staff are not aware of significant risks associated with the children that they look after.

The close proximity of the two children's homes means that children go missing from home together and place themselves at risk. On one occasion, two children went missing, one from each of the homes. A third child met up with them in the community. A child later disclosed that one of the children had used inappropriate language and attempted to engage them in inappropriate behaviour. The paperwork for this incident is poor. Staff failed to accurately record when children were out of sight. The management oversight of the incident is weak and does not consider what could have been done differently.

The management oversight of physical interventions is inadequate. The manager does not review the appropriateness of the physical intervention within the required time frames. In addition, there are delays in completing staff debriefs and providing children with key-work sessions.

Managers have failed to consider known risk and vulnerabilities of children being admitted to the home or their impact on those children already resident. The impact risk assessment, which is a key document for assessing new admission to the home, is inadequate. It fails to address how staff will manage risks and keep all children safe. This is a significant failure and has had a negative impact on children.

Staff unnecessarily restrict children's movements around the home. Staff lock internal doors to prevent children from moving freely, in order to manage behaviour. Inspectors found that doors to the small lounge, the games room and one of the kitchen doors were locked. These restrictions are not risk assessed or justified, neither is their impact considered.

Aspects of the home's environment are inadequate. Staff have not ensured that one child has appropriate furniture or personal belongings in his bedroom. A child's room smelt strongly of urine and their bed was wet. The main bathroom in the house was dirty, there was no toilet seat, no toilet paper or products for washing.

Managers do not ensure that all staff complete key training, such as child sexual exploitation, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, preventing bullying, understanding autism, and attachment disorder. This means that staff lack the knowledge to meet the specific needs of the children placed in their care.

Managers do not keep the admissions and discharge book up to date. Staff failed to record for one young person the date that they left or where they were discharged to.

Managers do not always notify Ofsted of significant incidents in a timely way. This leaves Ofsted without the necessary information to have oversight of the home.

Following this inspection, Ofsted suspended the home's registration. In addition, compliance notices under regulation 6, 12, 13 and 14 were also raised.

## **Recent inspection history**

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2019	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>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding.</p> <p>Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(viii)) *</p>	06/09/2020

<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>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>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</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;</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p> <p>Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e)) *</p>	<p>06/09/2020</p>
<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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	<p>06/09/2020</p>

<p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</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)(a)(b)(2)(a)(d)(f)(h)) *</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>Regulation 14 (1)(a)) *</p>	06/09/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe.</p> <p>(Regulation 21 (b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))</p>	06/09/2020
<p>If the registered provider is an organisation, the organisation must ensure that the responsible individual undertakes such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the</p>	06/09/2020

responsible individual has the skills needed for supervising the management of the home.	
Regulation 29 (2)	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.	06/09/2020
The registered person must—	
maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;	
ensure that the records are kept up to date.	
Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	06/09/2020
there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.	
(Regulation 40 (4)(e))	

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- As outlined in 10.1, the registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. Staffing structures should promote continuity of care from the child's perspective. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- All staff should strive to build positive relationships with children in the home and develop a culture of openness and trust that encourages them to be able to tell someone if they have concerns or worries about their safety. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.11)

## 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.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 (coronavirus) is currently posing to those it inspects. During this visit, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 by the home. This has included the effect these have had on staffing arrangements.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 2509300

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

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Ltd

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

**Responsible individual:** Matthew Fisher

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Debbie Holder, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2020