

# 2494551

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 company. It provides care for up to seven children who may have experienced emotional and/or social difficulties and/or have learning disabilities. Five children were living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

### Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 17 January 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2022	Full	Good
27/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/05/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Children's day-to-day experiences vary. Children have gone through a period of instability due to several experienced staff leaving the home. New staff have joined the home. This has led to an increase of incidents because new staff have not known and understood the children well. Senior managers have identified this and have sourced additional support to ensure that children's welfare remains central to the running of the home.

Staff actively promote and support children's education. When children have not been in school for a long time, they are supported to return in a structured way. Good support for children's education has helped them to make consistent progress from their starting points. This ensures that children achieve positive educational outcomes.

Children's health needs are well promoted by staff. They can access the physical and mental health services they need. Staff create a nurturing environment in the home. They encourage children to have meals together. These meals are nutritious and freshly prepared.

Children enjoy participating in a variety of social activities. Some children have joined swimming and horse riding clubs. Others love listening to music, gaming and taking part in other activities in the home. Staff ensure that they take photos of these occasions to build positive memories for children of their time living in the home.

Staff understand the importance of maintaining family relationships. They ensure that the children see their families and friends. This helps children to maintain a strong bond and positive cultural identity.

Children live in a pleasant and homely environment that provides ample space for them to live and relax in. The children's bedrooms are tailored to suit their preferences. The physical conditions of the home help children to feel valued, which is good for their self-esteem.

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

Staff's care of the children is not delivered in a consistently safe way. Despite risk assessments and behaviour management plans being in place, some staff have not followed this guidance. As a result of staff's inconsistencies, there were two serious incidents where children were not safeguarded effectively. This shortfall does not promote the welfare and safety of children.

Children have been physically held by the staff to prevent injury to themselves or others. There has been a high level of physical restraints since the last inspection. Following a restraint, the staff and children, including any child who has witnessed the incident, have the opportunity to talk about their experience. However, on occasion, the recording of the restraints is not always accurate. These discrepancies do not provide a clear picture of what has taken place.

There are many occasions when the manager has not evaluated whether physical restraint has been necessary to keep children safe. This does not ensure that the measures used have been fair and proportionate.

Staff ensure that they follow appropriate protocols when children go missing from home. They work closely with local police teams, social workers and families to quickly locate children. Staff ensure that children receive independent return home interviews. In addition, staff have discussions with children to help them reflect on their actions. This helps staff to understand potential risks to children when they are away from home and supports them take action to manage and reduce these.

Allegation management is strong. Prompt action is taken to ensure that the well-being of children is safeguarded. The manager has a good working relationship with the local authority designated officer and the children's social workers. This helps to keep children safe.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager has resigned and is in the process of de-registering with Ofsted. Senior managers have appointed an interim manager to support the team while they recruit to the post.

Not all staff have received appropriate supervision and guidance in line with company timescales and policy. Large gaps in the supervisory processes have weakened managerial oversight and guidance given to staff. This shortfall means that managers are unable to quickly identify poor practice. This is detrimental to children's progress.

The manager does not always respond promptly to recommendations made by the independent person. The failure to act quickly to address the recommendations affects the ability to drive forward improvements in the home.

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of one serious incident that placed a child at risk of harm. This prevented Ofsted from ensuring that management oversight of the incident had taken place to prevent harm to a child.

Staff either hold a relevant qualification for their role or are enrolled to complete this qualification in the required period. All staff have completed the mandatory training and additional training linked to the individual needs of the children. Staff benefit

from regular team meetings. These meetings are used as an opportunity to share learning. This helps to ensure that outcomes for children are positive.

## 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 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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; and</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vii)(b))</p>	20 January 2023
<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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and</p>	20 January 2023

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(e)(h))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees—  undertake appropriate continuing professional development;  receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and  have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	20 January 2023
The registered person must ensure that—  within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—  the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii))	20 January 2023
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—  there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	20 January 2023

## 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:** 2494551

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

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Graeme Cheyne

**Registered manager:** Shelly Taylor

## Inspectors

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector (lead)  
Carol Jagger, Social Care Inspector

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