

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children who have emotional and/or behavioural problems.

Inspection date: 4 April 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **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: N/A

Overall judgement at last inspection: N/A

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people make significant progress in their educational attendance through living at the home. They learn to value the role that education plays in their lives.
- Staff quickly establish healthy routines for young people. This supports their

learning and general physical health.

- Behaviours and peer associations that previously posed a risk to young people's welfare are replaced with positive, fun activities. Young people become safer through living at the home.
- Staff and managers are committed to improving the lives and outcomes for young people. Staff are child-focused in their approach to working with young people.
- A strong management team encourages and supports a learning environment for staff and continually seeks to adjust their care of young people.
- There is a strong emphasis upon working with other agencies in order to formulate care and therapeutic plans for young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered manager 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).
- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make tangible progress in their lives. From starting points of very low and negligible attendance at school, young people are now fully engaged in learning and their attendance at school is very high. There is active liaison between staff and the school and out of school learning is fully supported. This contributes to young people's future life outcomes and offers them opportunities to achieve.

Staff quickly establish good routines for young people, which supports their progress. Young people receive the rest that they require and are healthier as a result. In addition, young people are introduced to positive leisure activities that promote their social skills, replacing previously harmful behaviours.

Young people experience care from staff that offers unfailing patience and understanding. Harmful or negative behaviour from young people is viewed by staff as reflecting their complex needs, and so avoids any attribution of 'blame'. As a result, young people are offered unconditional support in times of crisis. One social worker commented: 'Before, he did very much what he wanted to do, wasn't in education, was routinely missing overnight and during the day and was using cannabis. All this has very much reduced. They are very firm and consistent with him. It is going very well. He is in education nearly every day. Progress for him is really significant.'

All young people benefit from therapeutic assessment and a therapy plan. This assists staff to respond appropriately to young people and individualise their care plans. Support from the home's psychologist informs and improves staff responses to young people. This means that the care being offered is reflective and considered in its approach.

Staff are consistent in their expectations of young people and balance a restorative approach with setting incentives and minor reparations. This gives young people an opportunity to understand the consequences of their behaviours in an educative way,

alongside working positively towards goals. This approach is supplemented by staff spending good-quality time with young people, enabling trust and a sense of security to develop.

Staff and managers listen to young people and their views are important to the running of the home. For example, some young people requested that staff wear less formal clothes in the home and this was positively responded to.

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

As a result of living at the home, some young people have demonstrated a change in the behaviours that posed a risk to their welfare. Behaviour such as drug misuse and frequent and prolonged missing from home incidents have reduced significantly and virtually ceased. When missing from home incidents do occur, staff respond appropriately and in line with agreed procedures.

Staff and managers learn from any incidents that occur and the challenges that some behaviours present. As a result of this reflective and evaluative process, staff adjust their responses and the need for physical intervention has reduced.

Staff and managers understand the risks associated with young people's previous life experiences, their vulnerabilities and how this is reflected in negative behaviour. There are good working relationships with other agencies, such as the police, to reduce incidents that may occur and so avoid the criminalisation of young people. Staff are thoughtful and creative in their attempts to reduce behaviours that young people present and could pose a risk to others.

Safe and comprehensive procedures to recruit staff are followed by the manager and this ensures that young people are not exposed to adults who may pose a risk to their welfare. Staff training reflects the needs of young people. It ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge base to manage any incidents in a safe and supportive manner.

Young people who are new to the home experience well-coordinated introductions and are made to feel welcome. Managers are active in gaining insight into the needs of young people before they arrive at the home. This ensures that staff can provide good immediate care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager was registered to manage the home in November 2016. She is suitably qualified and experienced. She provides good levels of both practical and supervisory support to staff, seeking to change practice in order to further improve young people's experiences of living at the home.

However, over the last few months, there have been changes to the management structure. As a result of these changes, some supervisory documents were not available to view. This weakens managerial oversight and means that staff do not have a copy of

their last supervision notes.

Although the majority of supervisions are well recorded, this standard of practice is not consistent. For example, opportunities for reflective discussions were not made available for all staff. A new supervision template has been introduced that offers greater focus to the process, but this is yet to be fully embedded in practice.

Managers evaluate the quality of care that staff offer and they seek advice from other professionals to support the work of staff. This ensures that when young people falter in their progress, this is quickly addressed and intervention is appropriately adjusted. A social worker commented: 'He is challenging but they have stuck with him. In terms of his behaviour, a lot of homes I work with they would have given up. Staff try different techniques and ways to prevent breakdown. They have been creative in their approach.'

Young people benefit from a multi-agency approach and the continuous monitoring of progress and the outcomes that have been set. Regular meetings and reviews, outside of those set by statutory guidelines, ensure that young people receive care that keeps pace with their emerging needs. Insights and information about young people are shared with other professionals frequently. One social worker commented: 'The home is very open with sharing information. I think in terms of communication and the level of information I get, I know everything I need to know about the child.'

Case recording for young people is clear and comprehensive. They reflect young people's involvement in those plans and their active contribution to the planning process.

Managerial systems of auditing and the general oversight of quality of care are strong and comprehensive. The management team is aware and has insight into the areas that it would like to see improved and it has suitable plans in place to address these. For example, managers are introducing early discussion and involvement of the whole staff team when considering new admissions to the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference 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 inspectors have 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 who 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: 1244280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Howard Tennant

Registered manager: Lisa White

Inspector(s)

Pauline Yates: social care inspector

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