

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The purpose of the home is to provide a therapeutically managed facility to meet the nurturing, management, social, emotional and moral needs of up to seven children or young people aged eight to 18 of either sex who are unable to live in a family context. The therapeutic rationale and practice in the home is fundamentally based on attachment principles combined with a variety of environmental and supportive strategies.

The manager of the home registered with Ofsted in March 2018. She is experienced in providing residential care for children and has an appropriate level 5 qualification in leadership and management of residential settings.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 November 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

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

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 17 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/04/2017	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, the 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
*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— that staff— 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iv))	04/02/2019
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(c)(f))	04/02/2019
*The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended	04/02/2019

that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(a))	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people is judged to be inadequate because there are serious failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Children and young people have been exposed to and have engaged in sexualised behaviour and contact at the home. This has a significant detrimental impact on children's and young people's ability to understand and form appropriate, healthy relationships.

Children and young people have had harmful sexual experiences that are inappropriate and impact negatively on their childhood and adolescent experiences and hinder healthy emotional development.

Children and young people have developed close relationships with the staff team who encourage and support them to personalise their bedrooms. Children and young people are helped to make choices about day-to-day routines in the home.

Children and young people with a history of non-engagement and disruption to their education have been helped to return to education routines. They attend education and are achieving and making good progress.

Staff ensure that children and young people are registered with local healthcare services and access specialist support to meet their needs. The staff team promotes a healthy and active lifestyle.

Children and young people are encouraged to develop hobbies and interests and engage in positive activities outside of the home such as horse-riding and dancing. These activities help to raise their self-esteem and promote their social development.

The staff team supports the children and young people to maintain links with their families and people who are important to them. This helps the children and young people to build and retain their own identities and enhances their emotional health and well-being.

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

Impact risk assessments are completed prior to placement. The assessments consider the complex needs and vulnerabilities of the children and young people. However, the assessments do not sufficiently evaluate how the home intends to meet those specific needs and mitigate the risks when making new placements alongside existing residents,

in particular children and young people who have heightened risks of sexualised behaviour.

Children and young people accommodated at the home have been subject to sexually harmful behaviour. They have engaged in sexual activity with each other on multiple occasions. Risk management plans do not provide detailed strategies for staff to follow to ensure that children and young people do not enter each other's bedrooms.

A disclosure of sexual contact between two children was notified to Ofsted and other agencies. Supervision levels were enhanced for a short period of time and then later relaxed. The same children have engaged in further sexual activity. Leaders and staff have failed to recognise a potential risk of a repeated incident occurring. The safeguarding arrangements to reduce the risk to children and young people were found to be inadequate.

Staff were unable to fully recall the detail of which children and young people have had sexual contact with other peers. This does not provide confidence that staff have a detailed awareness of risk in relation to individual relationships and that children's and young people's behaviour is managed to prevent them from harming each other.

Children and young people who go missing from the home receive a well-coordinated response. Staff proactively attempt to locate them and report them missing to appropriate agencies.

The staff have physically intervened when children and young people are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others. Practice is proportionate and justified. The records are thorough and children, young people and staff are debriefed accordingly.

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

The manager of the service was registered with Ofsted in March 2018. Since the last inspection, 16 staff and the previous manager have left the home. Leaders have successfully recruited new members of staff and feel that the current staff team will provide children and young people with the stability that they need.

Staff have regular supervision and have accessed a variety of training opportunities. Staff have their performance regularly appraised. Staff have had enhanced training, such as self-harm and ligature removal. Not all staff have had full training on sexually harmful behaviour and self-harm, although this has been planned. A requirement is made to ensure that all staff complete the full versions of these courses.

Some children and young people cared for at the home have a history of sexualised behaviour. The statement of purpose does not identify this within the range of needs accommodated at the home.

The manager has conducted a quality of care review. The review did not identify specific concerns relating to sexually harmful and sexualised behaviour in the home. Leaders have failed to recognise the detrimental impact that these incidents have on the quality of care provided and the experiences of the children and young people who live at the home.

Professionals from partner agencies have provided positive feedback about the leadership of the home and the quality of care delivered. However, others have stated that supervision levels at the home are insufficient in the context of the safeguarding matters identified.

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 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 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 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: 1244280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Howard Tennant

Registered manager: Michelle Hird

Inspector(s)

Nicola Thomas, social care inspector

Jane Titley, social care inspector

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