

# 1247560

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to care for up to four young people. This children's home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care and accommodation for young people who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 16 to 17 January 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 19 September 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/09/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Based on their starting points when first entering the home, young people make excellent progress in all areas of their lives. This is because of the aspirational culture and underpinning ethos of the home. This helps young people to develop a positive outlook on life and have ambition for their future.

Staff and managers display a real passion for their roles. They have created a genuine family feel to the home where young people feel safe and happy.

Staff demonstrate great respect and empathy for young people who have experienced trauma. They take into account the underlying reasons for behaviour and respond effectively. Despite facing significant challenges, young people's self-belief and confidence have improved significantly because of the care and support they receive from staff.

A commendable emphasis by staff and managers in the home is placed on the value of education. Most young people have a history of poor attendance and engagement in education. However, from the day they move into this home, the expectations of staff, coupled with structured routines, enable young people to start the school day in a positive frame of mind. As a result, young people's re-engagement with education is exceptional.

Staff work hard to promote family relationships, even when this has been challenging. They ensure that young people are supported to have the best contact they can with families and those that are important to them. This demonstrates to young people that they are cared about, and staff work with them and their social workers to maintain or improve relationships with their family.

Staff actively promote young people's engagement in activities and harness their individual interests and talents. For example, one young person has been volunteering at a local animal sanctuary, and another has gained part-time employment at a local football club. This has had a significant impact on their confidence and enables them to develop their social skills.

Staff encourage young people to follow a routine and to learn new skills. Staff teach essential practical skills, such as cooking, budgeting and completing laundry, and help them to develop emotional resilience. Every effort is made to help prepare young people for their transitions to young adulthood.

Young people live in a home that provides them with a high standard of accommodation and facilities. Young people personalise their bedrooms and communal areas. This has helped to make the house feel like a home where young people feel a real sense of belonging.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

There is a caring atmosphere throughout the home, and young people are motivated by the praise and rewards that they receive for their achievements. Young people confirmed that they like living at the home. One young person said, 'This is better than any of the other homes I've lived in. Staff are fair and they treat me with dignity and respect, and I'm much happier here.'

Young people make exceptional and sustained progress in reducing their risk-taking behaviour. They do not go missing from the home, and destructive behaviour has reduced considerably. For all young people, this is significant progress.

Excellent routines and boundaries mean that young people are clear about what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour. Staff work with young people to consider triggers and preferred methods of support at times of stress. Young people understand the risks they may face and feel fully included in their behaviour support plans. Consequently, aspects of young people's behaviour have stabilised considerably.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and are regularly reviewed and updated. They take into account each young person's level of understanding and include well-thought-out strategies for helping to keep themselves safe.

The staff are acutely aware of the risks that are present to young people and are proactive in educating them in areas of risk. For example, extensive work has been undertaken on the risks associated with online gaming. Key-work sessions reflect the way that staff use research-informed practice to support young people. As a result, young people are more able to keep themselves safe and protected.

The need for physical intervention has reduced. This is as a direct result of consistent early intervention to defuse challenging situations. However, when these methods are used, managers ensure that de-briefing sessions are undertaken with young people and staff. This provides an opportunity to explore each incident to see whether lessons can be learned and whether the incident could have been handled differently.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive regular safeguarding training. This enables them to recognise and respond effectively to child protection concerns.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The home is effectively led and managed by a skilled, competent and experienced registered manager and deputy manager. Together, they promote a strong child-focused ethos that is successfully implemented by the committed and caring staff team.

Staffing arrangements meet the needs of the young people. Although there have been some recent changes to the staff team, young people continue to experience a firm sense of stability.

Reflective practice is a strong feature, and this is integrated by the manager with her staff team in individual and group supervisions. This helps the manager to review and develop practices to ensure that the best care is given to the young people.

Staff are encouraged and supported in their training needs. There are clear expectations placed on them to complete the core staff training programme. The programme develops and refreshes skills and provides training in areas where it may be required.

Supervision is regular, purposeful and progressive. Staff confirmed that they feel very well supported in their roles. They are helped and encouraged to expand their competence and confidence in all areas of work. Consequently, the home is continuing to improve, and the staff team remains motivated and well equipped to meet the individual and complex needs of the young people.

Internal and external monitoring systems are excellent. Reports are of high quality and demonstrate sustained improvement over time. Leaders and managers continue to strive to improve all aspects of the home, consulting with the staff team in the development of processes to ensure that there is safe and consistent child-focused practice.

The quality of relationships between the registered manager, deputy manager, staff and partner agencies is excellent. All professionals spoken with reported very high levels of satisfaction with the care and progress of young people and the professionalism of staff.

Young people's case records are well maintained. Records provide a clear picture of how young people are doing on a daily basis. Their progress and achievements are well monitored and reported. Case records reflect the staff and manager's commitment to promoting their success.

## **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:** 1247560

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

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Ltd

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

**Responsible individual:** Marcella Bird

**Registered manager:** Caroline Greogory

## Inspector

Ceri Evans, social care inspector

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