

## Short Breaks for Children (Support Service) Support Service

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Shetland  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
8 February 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Shetland Islands Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002063

**Service no:**  
CS2003016760

## About the service

Short Breaks for Children provides a residential and support service for young people with additional support needs in Shetland. Most of the young people using the support service also receive short breaks at one of the two properties in Lerwick.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Sunday 4 and Monday 5 February 2024. The inspection was combined with the inspection of Short Breaks care home service and carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with people using the service and two parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback via questionnaires from parents, staff and external professionals.

## Key messages

- The team, including key staff and managers, worked really well alongside families and genuinely included and respected them as partners in their child's care.
- Young people and families receiving support from Short Breaks benefitted from a clear vision that was inspiring and promoted equality and inclusion for all.
- A strong cohesive staff team communicated effectively to ensure the young person was always at the centre of decisions and ensure a clear and consistent approach.

## From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the support provided, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people were kept safe both emotionally and physically. Staff knew the young people very well and used risk assessments and support plans to inform their care and support. They worked well together to discuss plans and the practicalities of safety. Parents we spoke to felt that staff would keep their children safe as they understood their personalities and needs.

Staff were aware of child protection processes and procedures, had undertaken training and felt confident in their actions. They advised that there was always a senior member of staff available for discussion and guidance and to ensure best practice, however, this may not always be a person with any depth of knowledge of the young people living at Short Breaks. The organisation had considered this arrangement and felt it was adequate, however, it may be useful to engage with staff and parents to review this arrangement.

There was a clear culture of relationship-based practice, sensitivity and understanding which meant the staff used the least restrictive practices possible, for the shortest time possible and only to ensure safety. A strong cohesive staff team communicated effectively to ensure the young person was always at the centre of decisions to ensure a clear and consistent approach. This had been very effective in supportively managing challenging situations in the best possible way for young people.

We observed warm, trusting, and nurturing relationships between staff and young people. Staff clearly had the right value base required to provide compassionate care. All of the staff spoke with warmth and respect about the young people they supported (and their families). They clearly wanted the best for them. Plans were made around the young people's wishes and needs, being mindful of important routines and planning to minimise anxiety and distress. Young people were at the forefront of all decisions.

The young people using the service were given as much choice as possible. They were supported to communicate their wishes and views using various communication styles and aids, and also benefitted from established relationships with a staff team who knew their interests and promoted new experiences. A young person we spoke with gave some brilliant examples and was clearly involved in sharing ideas and planning. Newsletters shared with families allowed them to see the adventures and fun experiences their children were having and to share news about forthcoming events.

The team, including key staff and managers, worked really well alongside families and genuinely included and respected them as partners in their child's care. Events had been held where the whole family share time and had fun together. Families felt relaxed and welcomed and very well supported by everyone. Their feedback was extremely positive.

Young people were understood by those looking after them and their rights were championed. The aims and objectives of the service had clear links to the United Nations convention for the rights of the child (UNCRC). There were strong examples of the staff advocating on behalf of young people to ensure their rights were upheld.

Young people and families receiving support from Short Breaks benefitted from a clear vision that was

inspiring and promoted equality and inclusion for all. We found that leaders were aspirational, actively seeking to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people.

Staff described a knowledgeable and approachable manager who would passionately stand up for the service, taking their views into account. Plans for senior staff to better use their skills to work alongside the team and offer guidance and had been halted by their need to spend the majority of their time on organisational tasks. A further plan for the near future will be very helpful to them better using their skills to the benefit of the team.

Young people benefitted from a confident staff team who delivered quality support and trauma informed care. This was underpinned by regular, support and supervision, training and an opportunity to reflect on practice. Staff commented very positively on the support they received, about an empowering culture, and a highly individual flexible approach to meeting the needs of the young people.

The service had an improvement plan which incorporated organisational and service objectives and identified key changes and how these would be met. Developments were guided by the Health and Care Standards, were 'Promise' focussed and considered how and who would be involved in meeting identified objectives. The plan would be strengthened by ensuring it incorporated the views of parents and young people. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

Quality assurance processes had improved considerably since the last inspection with auditing processes generally well used to ensure high quality support plans and risk assessments which were reviewed regularly. This was beneficial to ensuring young people's support met their current needs and wishes.

### Areas for improvement

1. The service should consider how they gain the views of families and incorporate these into plans for the future.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am actively encouraged to be improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership (HSCS 4.7); and

'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve' (HSCS 4.8).

## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure their care and support is focussed and relevant to their changing needs, all children and young people must have a review of their care and support every six months, or more frequently if required.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

**This area for improvement was made on 11 October 2019.**

#### Action taken since then

Young people had support plans which were regularly reviewed.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good

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