

The Farmhouse Care Home Service

Backside Farm
Arnprior
Stirling
FK8 3EX

Telephone: 01360 850 710

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2024

Service provided by:
Common Thread Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2005007437

Service no:
CS2016347124

About the service

The Farmhouse is a small cottage, set in the countryside near the local city of Stirling. The house can care for up to two young people into adulthood. At the time of inspection there was two young people living in The Farmhouse.

The house is nicely decorated, and recently transformed space to allow for a gym area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 and 9 May 2024, between the hours of 09:00 and 20:30. The inspection was 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 two people using the service and three of their family/friends/representatives
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

During our inspection year 2024-2025 we are inspecting against a focus area which looks at how regulated services use legislation and guidance to promote children's right to continuing care and how children and young people are being helped to understand what their right to continuing care means for them. Any requirements or areas for improvement will be highlighted in this report.

Key messages

- Young people were kept safe and there was a pro-active approach to risk.
- Child and adult protection policies/procedures needed to be updated.
- There was an in-depth improvement plan to help the service become more trauma responsive.
- Staff had good relationships with the young people.
- Young people were doing well in education and employment.
- The manager had good oversight and introduced quality assurance processes.
- The service needed to consider how they could meet the young people's needs when considering admissions.

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 children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	4 - 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 children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

We found young people were kept safe. The service had worked hard to pro-actively support potential risks, and help young people reflect on these. However, we did find that risk assessments could be more informative to reflect how staff supported young people. This would allow all staff to provide a consistent approach to keeping young people safe.

On reviewing the child and adult protection procedures in the house we recognised the need for these to be updated. We found the policy did not refer to the latest national guidance. There was also contradicting information in the procedure which differed from the policy. This needed to be updated to ensure there was clear guidance to support the protection of young people. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

The staff team were on a journey to become more trauma responsive in their practice. The manager had identified a clear plan which included regular training to enhance the trauma skills of the staff team. Staff told us, "We have had a lot of training recently which has helped me understand trauma and change my practice." This helped to ensure the service strived to provide high quality care to young people to help understand their needs.

Staff had good relationships with the young people. The young people told us, "The staff here are good." When speaking with staff they were clear of the importance of building relationships with young people. This allowed staff to recognise when young people needed extra support, or a change in plan for their day. Young people developed safe and trusting relationships from this approach.

There was good access to health professionals. We heard how the service had advocated the views of young people to ensure they got the support they needed. There was also evidence of the staff team engaging with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) on behalf of the young people to ensure their needs were being met.

The service prioritised building good relationships with families. Staff told us, "It's so important to be able to support families to progress their plans." Young people were supported to see their family where possible and the service was committed to supporting this time. We also heard how the service hoped to progress this area of work to provide further opportunities for families to spend valuable time together. This led to young people feeling included in their care.

Young people were encouraged to learn and develop their education. We saw young people celebrating their achievements when we arrived, and they were excited to tell us, "I've got my Nat 4." The service offered and supported a bespoke timetable of learning for young people to ensure they had structure to their day. Young people also had been successful in securing employment and were looking to attend college in the future. This led to them feeling a sense of achievement, and confidence in progressing their future plans.

Mealtimes in the house were homely and nurturing. We saw how staff considered the young people's views in menu planning, ensuring there was meals which they enjoyed. Young people told us, "The food is good."

Staff felt supported and empowered by the manager of the service. We saw how the manager had worked hard to upskill staff and give them confidence in decision making. There was clear recognition of the improvements needed in the service, and we were reassured there was a clear plan to address these going forward.

We found the service needed to ensure when they considered admissions they could meet their needs. We found this had not been the case, with times where there had been low levels of staffing and a lack of training. This had led to poor outcomes for young people with staff unable to meet their needs and keep them safe. **(See area for improvement 2.)**

At the time of inspection there was a good level of staffing available to the young people. Although there had been difficulties recruiting a full staff team, there was always a consistent member of staff available to the young people. However, this had not always been the practice which was undertaken. We were glad the service has recognised the impact of the need for consistent staffing to ensure young people receive safe, stable care.

There was quality assurance systems in place which recognised areas for development. The manager was reflective in recognising the need for training and development in the team. They developed clear plans to develop their knowledge and ensured this was in line with achieving the aims of the service. This led to young people being supported by people who understood their needs.

We found the care plans in place needed to be more child friendly. The service had developed some additional plans which we felt were more informative and captured the views of young people. However, this needed to be adapted into one plan which was clear for staff supporting the young people. The manager was aware of this and had plans to implement this in the future.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's protection and safety, the provider should ensure that the child and adult protection policy and procedure is updated.

This should include, but is not limited to, a clear procedure which is consistent with the policy and national guidance.

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

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

2. To support children's wellbeing and safety, the provider should ensure when considering admissions the service can meet the needs of the young people.

This should include, but not limited to, ensuring staff are trained and there is the right level of staffing.

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

'I am in the right place to experience the care and support I need and want' (HSCS 1.20).

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	4 - Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	4 - Good
7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	4 - Good

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