

Supported Lodgings Scheme Adult Placement Service

Family Placement Team
122-124 Irish Street
Dumfries
DG1 2PB

Telephone: 01387 262 612

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

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About the service

Supported Lodgings Scheme is an adult placement service run by Dumfries and Galloway Council. It recruits and supports carers to support young people over the age of 16. The service also supports foster carers providing Continuing Care to young people over the age of 18.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place between 13 May and 3 June 2024. 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 one young person and two caregiving families. We spoke to six staff and managers and two external professionals and received information from pre-inspection surveys.

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.

The provider of this service is a corporate parent, with statutory responsibilities to look after and accommodate children. This may mean that the duty to care for children and young people on an emergency basis, or with highly complex needs, is their highest safeguarding priority.

In these circumstances our expectations, focus on outcomes and evaluations remain identical to those of all other providers. We may, however, provide some additional narrative in the body of the report to reflect the impact of these duties, should it be relevant to this particular service.

Key messages

- Young people within the service experienced positive outcomes.
- Caregiver families were well supported by staff from the service.
- Specific carer training for supported lodgings carers was in place.
- The service should explore transition pathways when young people reach the age of 21.
- Workload pressure was impacting on staff morale.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Young people experienced meaningful, affectionate and secure relationships with their caregiver families. Young people had often been living with their caregiver families for a number of years and relationships continued when formal care arrangements ended. One carer told us "We are a family now, I genuinely cannot see a future when [name] is no longer in our lives".

Caregiver families felt well supported by staff from the supported lodgings service, one carer told us "our social worker has been excellent". Caregiver families provided individualised care that was responsive to need and recognised young people's rights as they transition in to adulthood.

Young people were included in their Pathway planning by the Young Person's Transition Team and were made aware of their legal rights. Young people's views formed part of reviews of caregiver families and the service aims to increase this participation further.

Young people's views helped to influence service development. The Bright Spots programme sought the views of care experienced young people in Dumfries and Galloway. The service also consulted with young people regarding the use of some additional funding and the name change for what was the leaving care

team.

As part of ongoing Promise development work, the service is reviewing its use of language and young people have also taken part in interviews for staff within the Young People's Transition Team which evidences a commitment to a participatory approach to service delivery.

Young people had access to formal advocacy within Dumfries and Galloway but there was no examples of this being used by young people within the supported lodgings service.

Young people experienced highly personalised care, from carers who understood their strengths and preferences. Family relationships were well supported and promoted by caregiver families.

Family experiences such as holidays were available to young people who were encouraged to be active members of their community. Young people had access to leisure passes, driving lessons and engaged in a range of positive activities. The service had high aspirations for young people who were engaged in education and employment.

Young people were kept safe due to a robust safeguarding practice within the service. Staff and carers had received training in both child and adult protection and safer caring training was available. Caregiver families also had access to trauma informed training relating to therapeutic parenting which supported them in their role. The service had developed specific training requirements for supported lodgings carers and had attempted to re-start a support group but this had not been well attended. To develop a positive learning culture, the service should continue to promote learning opportunities and engage with carers in a supportive way, this will form an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1).

Young people's health needs were well met by their caregiver families and young people had access to a specialist mental health practitioner based within the transitions team which was a valuable source of direct support. Staff from the service also worked directly with young people to support them with health related issues.

The service aimed to support young people to achieve interdependence and learn new skills as part of everyday life. Young people were supported to gain important life skills such as cooking and budgeting to prepare them for adult life.

Most carers within the service had undergone a conversion assessment as they had previously been caring for young people on a fostering basis. A supported lodgings panel is in place to approve and review caregiver families. The service recognises a need to improve the voice of young people within this panel process.

Continuity of support remained for caregiver families who retained the same named supervising social worker. Allocated supervising social workers worked closely with workers from the Young People's Transition team who became allocated when young people approached 16.

Although a number of young people remained with their caregiver families, the formal supported lodgings arrangement ended when they turned 21. The service should review transition arrangements and support options for young people reaching 21 who may not be fully ready to move in to independent living. This will form an area for improvement (see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To promote a positive learning culture the provide should ensure that carers are fully engaging in learning and support.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Ensuring carers attend required mandatory training
- b) Engaging with carers to discuss how best to facilitate peer support groups.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the health and social care standards which state: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

2. To ensure young people are effectively supported when they reach the age of 21, the service should review transition pathways from the supported lodgings service.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) A review of options for young people who may wish to remain living within supported lodgings past the age of 21.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the health and social care standards which state that:

"My care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Outcomes for young people were reviewed regularly through pathway reviews undertaken by the Young People Transitions Team. Carer supervision discussed outcomes for young people and the supervising social workers provided appropriate support to promote these.

The service had an improved approach to quality assurance which had improved consistency of practice within the team. A practice audit had been undertaken and a new IT system was being developed which will allow improved reporting and monitoring when this is operational.

A service development plan was in place which evidenced how the service had met requirements and areas for improvement from the previous inspection. This could have been stronger in defining the overall aims and aspirations for the service.

A supported lodgings panel was in place with appropriate membership. Panel appraisal and development sessions were in place to promote panel member development. A new independent panel chair was in place and panel advisor roles had been created. Panel advisors had access to training from the Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Alliance (AFKA). The service acknowledges a need to improve participation of young people in the panel process.

Although there had not been an impact on outcomes for young people, the service should improve it's recording and monitoring of significant incidents and ensure that these are reported to the Care

Inspectorate in accordance with legislation. This will form an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that young people's safety is protected, the service should ensure that significant incidents are documented and notified to the Care Inspectorate appropriately.

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

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

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Staff had supportive relationships with their caregiver families which supported them to be effective in their role. Staff were provided with regular supervision and had personal development plans to identify future learning needs. Staff had access to a range of learning opportunities which included access to external accredited training. Qualified staff retained overall responsibility for supporting carers and arrangements were in place for cover during periods of worker absence.

Staff felt well supported by their direct line managers, one staff member told us "my senior is very supportive and always listens to me". Staff also felt the team was supportive and knowledgeable, one staff member told us "the team is very supportive of one another and has some highly skilled workers".

There had been a number of organisational changes and staff turnover which had impacted on the team. Staffing levels and elements of new work practices were impacting negatively on team morale and staff confidence in their abilities. The service should engage with staff to understand these pressures so they can be equipped to provide a quality service to caregiver families. This will form an area for improvement (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure staff are supported to provide high quality support, the provider should engage with staff to discuss concerns raised.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Addressing staffing and workload pressures
- b) Ensuring the workforce is trusted and empowered and equipped to deliver the best quality practical care and emotional support by improving staff morale.

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS, 3.14).

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people benefitted from comprehensive pathway planning that was undertaken collaboratively and regularly reviewed. Supervising social workers within the supported lodgings service worked alongside the Young Person's Transition team to achieve positive outcomes for young people within the service.

Safer caring plans and risk assessments were in place and these were detailed and individualised to young people's needs. The service is looking to further develop the language and content of these documents to better fit with the age group using the service.

Young people within the service experienced positive outcomes and were engaged in a range of positive activity including education/employment. Care and support supported young people to achieve interdependence with an emphasis on gaining skills as part of daily life. This ensured young people were effectively supported and able to make successful transitions into adulthood.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 1 April 2022, the service must ensure that the health and wellbeing of young people is always appropriately managed. In order to achieve this, the service must ensure all carers are offered and attend appropriate training, including adult protection and any relevant specialist training.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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 abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20); and

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.24).

This requirement was made on 13 December 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

- Mandatory training requirements for SL carers
- Adult protection training provided.
- De-escalation training in development.
- Supporting young people to adulthood training available.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 1 April 2022, the service must ensure that the health and wellbeing of young people is always appropriately managed. In order to achieve this the service must implement meaningful, timeous care planning and review processes for all young people and carers.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(2)(B) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/2010).

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

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This requirement was made on 13 December 2021.

Action taken on previous requirement

- Young people have YPTT worker, pathway plans and reviews in place.
- Safer caring plans and risk assessments review need.
- Young people's views requested as part of the carer review.

Met - within timescales

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

To support meaningful, enduring professional relationships for young people and carers, the provider should ensure continuity of worker wherever possible.

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

'I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation' (HSCS 4.15).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2021.

Action taken since then

- SSW stays the same following transition to SL.
- YPTT involved from 15.5.

Previous area for improvement 2

To promote a high quality care experience, the provider should ensure regular and formal support and supervision to carers which aligns to the Signs of Safety approach being introduced to all aspects of service delivery.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS, 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2021.

Action taken since then

- Supervision template for recording discussions.
- Carers receive regular formal supervision.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure that the future needs of children and young people can be effectively planned for, the provider should ensure the timeous assessment and approval of carers.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2021.

Action taken since then

- Conversion assessment for approval.
- Panel quarterly, process for interim ADM approval if needed outwith timescales.

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 people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
1.1 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	4 - Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to support children, young people, adults and their caregiver families	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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