

Netherton School Care Accommodation Service

Netherton
Ochiltree
Cumnock
KA18 2PU

Telephone: 01290 702 880

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 April 2024

Service provided by:
Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2006008009

Service no:
CS2007164226

About the service

Netherton is provided by Spark of Genius Ltd and is registered to provide school care accommodation to a maximum of six young people aged between 10 and 18 years of age.

The service is located in a rural setting in East Ayrshire and provides residential living accommodation for the young people.

The service sits within its own grounds and consists of a main house which accommodates five of the young people and an adjacent detached cottage accommodating one young person.

The young people have individualised bedrooms. There is a large lounge for communal and social activities and a second smaller lounge area. The house also has a large dining kitchen.

The adjacent cottage has its own facilities for the young person to use.

The grounds to the service consists of grass areas for the young people to play and exercise and there is an equipped play area specifically for the younger children.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11, 12th and 13th April 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 five people using the service, one of their family, and two of their representatives
- Spoke with eight staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

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 areas for improvement will be highlighted in this report.

Key messages

- Young people were kept safe within the service.
- The staff had developed positive, nurturing relationships with the young people.
- The staff were strong advocates for young people's voices being heard and having their rights respected.
- The young people were fully supported to achieve both in school education and in accessing college placements.
- Young people were supported through continuing care arrangements and to prepare to transition to independent living at a pace that suited them.
- The management and staff had addressed previous requirements and developed a stable, settled environment.

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?	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 children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. This was because we found major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people whilst finding very few areas for improvement. Those that did exist, we considered would have minimal adverse impact on people's experiences and outcomes.

Young people were confidently interacting with staff, seeking guidance, support or time to play. They were relaxed and comfortable around the staff. Positive relationships being built through these interactions. Nurturing care was evident in these exchanges with young people's individual needs being addressed.

Staff and management had responded to concerns raised by young people in a timely manner and appropriate action taken. Concerns raised under whistleblowing procedures had been investigated. These actions enabled young people to feel safe in the service and have confidence that staff would listen to them and respond to their needs. Responsible adults from outside the service included education and health staff, in addition to social workers independent advocates and family members. These supports added to young people's assurances of their wellbeing.

Staff developed these positive relationships whilst offering the young people activities of interest or in trying new experiences. Young people were engaging in the community playing with football teams, participating in trampoline exercises, and going fishing, for example. Staff encouraged young people to try new fun activities such as baking. These activities helped develop young people's self-esteem and mental and physical health.

Young people's legal and human rights were respected. Young people's engagement with care planning was promoted, ensuring their voice was being heard. Staff also advocated strongly for young people and there were examples where young people's rights had been successfully championed, in respect of meeting with people important to them, for example. Young people's engagement with their education was fully promoted and supported by staff. Managers had advocated for young people in respect of issues affecting education attendance also. Some young people had been supported under continuing care arrangements and were continuing to be supported through their choice to transition onto more independent living. These supports aimed to assure the young people's sense of wellbeing, worth and identity was protected and nurtured.

The service's quality assurance processes effectively identified several areas that we agreed would benefit from further development. These included staff's understanding of trauma, ensuring risk assessments were regularly updated and ensuring all staff were up to date with mandatory training. In addition to managers audits and self-evaluations the service undergoes inspection visits from external managers and seeks the views of young people, parents and external professionals. These processes contributed to a commitment to sustained service development and ensuring young people's voices are heard whilst achieving positive outcomes, in accordance with the Promise.

An analysis of the service providers restraint practices across all services was also conducted. We have suggested a more in-depth analysis of the service's record may prove beneficial to staff development. We found some sentences within some policy documents which we considered misleading and asked the service to review these.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 August 2023, the provider must improve the quality of admissions assessments for children and young people to assure that they receive the support they need to grow, thrive, achieve their potential, and experience placement stability.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) That all admissions and matching assessments follow the Care Inspectorate guidance "Matching Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for residential Services", OPS- 1118-418.
- b) That the assessment and placing decision clearly includes a review of previous assessments, utilising information about individual needs and plans.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(1) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SS1 2011/210) and 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 22 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Matching assessments were being completed with more detail. Although impact assessment could include more assessment in terms of impact of current residents there was consideration of how the dynamics could be impacted. Individual needs of the young people were therefore considered and the stability of the placement achieved.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 31 August 2023, the provider must improve the completion of service documentation and develop robust auditing of these recordings to support improved planning and interventions for young people. To do this, the provider must:
ensure care plans comply with SMART principles that;

- a) clearly recorded specific actions to achieve positive outcomes for young people.
- b) actions that have clear measurements.
- c) actions are realistic for the young person.
- d) an identified timeframe for completion of each action,

And

e) ensure that all care plans and risk assessments are individualised and up to date.

f) ensure that risk assessments contain accurate up to date information.

This is to comply with Regulations 3, 4(1)(a) and 4 (1)(c) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

"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) and

"I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources" Inspection (HSCS 4.27) and, "I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions" (HSCS 2.25).

This requirement was made on 22 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Care plans had been updated in line with SMART principles and individual aims, actions and supports identified. Risk assessments were being updated on the services online system however this was not always evident from the hard copy in files. However the service quality assurance process had identified this as an area to be improved upon.

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 ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "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) the provider must ensure that all staff receive sufficient and regular training corresponding to the needs of, and risks present for, the young people in the service and that an appropriate record is maintained of such training.

This area for improvement was made on 22 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff induction and training covered mandatory training subjects covering the young people's needs. Some staff had specific training in some additional areas. The service's internal quality assurance had identified where this could be improved upon further.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "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 organizational codes" (HSCS 3.24) the provider must ensure that all staff receive regular, and good quality formal supervision and that an appropriate record is maintained.

Particular attention should be given to the frequency of supervision for new and inexperienced staff.

This area for improvement was made on 22 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff reported regular formal supervision in addition to informal opportunistic supervision. Newly recruited staff were given more frequent supervision and some staff given additional responsibility as senior practitioners to supervise staff.

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?	5 - Very Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	5 - Very Good

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