

# FCSS Aberdeenshire Support Services Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
26 July 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland  
SCIO

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2022000304

## About the service

FCSS Aberdeenshire Support Services is registered to provide a service to children aged 0 - 18 years old who have additional support needs.

The service state their aim 'to provide high quality care for children with additional support needs aged 0 - 18 either in their own home or out in their local community.

## About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place on Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 July 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

This was the services first inspection since registration.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information and information requested and provided by the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with people who used the service
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed documentation
- received feedback via MS form questionnaires.

## Key messages

- Children and young people engaged in activities they enjoyed, which also gave them new experiences and supported them to develop new skills.
- Young people and their families enjoyed supportive and trusting relationships with staff who knew them well.
- Leadership was strong and staff were well supported. Systems were in place to ensure the continuous improvement of the service.
- Support plans and a complaints procedure should be in a format which is accessible to all children and young people.

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

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 the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for young people, therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children and families benefitted from supportive care that was warm and encouraging. The families of people using the service told us that they appreciated their workers because they had developed good relationships with their children and knew them well. They said their children engaged in activities they enjoyed, whilst also giving them new experiences which broadened their world and supported them to develop new skills.

Staff and parents described young people being given choice in most situations, with skilful use of compromise and planning to ensure young people also enjoyed new experiences. Staff had good knowledge of local resources and events happening in the community which children and young people would enjoy.

The interests and talents of the young people were diverse, with staff responding flexibly, planning what they knew young people would both enjoy and also benefit from. There were very good examples of the team appreciating and promoting young people's individuality.

Where young people had specific health care needs, careful consideration was given to meeting these needs, without creating a barrier to new experiences. Parents described support which was attentive to what young people were communicating. The manager was a strong advocate for Makaton and the staff team were learning Makaton to support young people who communicated in this way.

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities of protecting people from harm, neglect and abuse. Appropriate procedures were in place, all had training and a senior member of the team was always available, including out of hours. Young people had good opportunity to grow and develop as the staff understood the importance of taking positive, informed risk, with appropriate risk assessments in place.

There were clear processes and service agreements to ensure people knew what they could expect from the service. Within these agreements parents describe a responsive staff team who understood the importance of consistency and routine whilst being as flexible as possible to ensure young people did not miss out on other events which occasionally clashed with their arranged support.

## How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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

Leadership was strong. The manager had positive relationships with families that offered the opportunity to informally and formally review people's experience of their support. Formal reviews were held six-monthly, with parent and young people's views central to plans, and children and young people being encouraged to contribute as much as possible.

There were comprehensive quality assurance processes in place. Managers had been at the forefront of establishing quality assurance systems which included a service improvement plan which ensured they were

clear about the direction of, and aspirations for the service moving forward. Staff had been involved, up to a point, but greater involvement of the team would give greater ownership of the identified improvements. Involvement from families in wider service improvement could also be further developed as families felt well informed about their child's care, but some felt there could be greater opportunity to shape future service improvement and delivery.

There were numerous working groups to ensure that best practice was shared and developed. Some were within the wider remit of FCSS, however, were also beneficial to the support service as they considered best practice and further skilled the staff team. There were a raft of audits which ensured that the standards and expectations of the organisation were met.

Families using the service were confident they could raise any concerns because they had well-established relationships with staff and managers and trusted them to act effectively. These relationships were fostered through regular open communication. There had been no complaints. It would be helpful to develop a way in which young people were empowered to raise concerns or complaints in a way which is accessible to them. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

The management, quality assurance and planning for the future were very good across the wider service (which included the support service), however, would benefit from being specific to the support service and role of staff. There was much less reflection following support sessions and no individual team meetings for support service staff - though the team did use regular supervision to discuss their specific role as a support worker. The recent staff wellbeing survey and 'Foghorn Friday' (an opportunity to celebrate success) demonstrated a supportive culture across the organisation, though there were areas of practice which also relied quite heavily on the goodwill of staff (such as the use of personal mobile phones for communication and safety and attending training in their own time). Staff felt very well supported by their immediate management.

## Areas for improvement

1. The service should develop a complaints procedure which is accessible to young people who may use alternative forms of communication to the written word.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19); and

'I receive and understand information and advice in a format or language that is right for me' ( HSCS 2.9).

## How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good as a number of positive strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The referral process ensured that leaders in the service had the right information to ensure young people were supported by people who could meet their needs. The level of support provided was agreed by the local authority who commissioned the service. Parents confirmed that staff developed strong relationships

with the people they supported, with consistent support delivered at a time that met the needs of the children and their families. Staff planned their time well to ensure young people had a positive experience.

As all of the support staff also had a role in the groups young people attended, they received ample training in relation to their 'wider' roles. There may be merit in considering whether all of this is relevant, and also whether specific training is needed for support staff who lone work with young people. Further training in de-escalation/break away techniques would provide staff with additional strategies and the confidence to deal with potentially challenging situations. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

Staff described a system which had been put in place to ensure their safety after home visits or following outings in the community. There would be merit to support staff having a phone provided by the organisation which would support this. This would also allow staff to contact parents directly should they need to do so before or during support sessions and to take photographs of young people enjoying their time in the community (currently not possible outwith the group setting due to appropriate restrictions on the use of personal phones). **(See area for improvement 1.)**

There was a robust recruitment and induction process, with all of the appropriate systems and checks in place to ensure staff had the right checks, values and skills.

## Areas for improvement

1. In order to maximise safety, the service should consider:

- a) providing staff training in de-escalation techniques
- b) providing staff who lone work with mobile phones.

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 is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unplanned event' ( HSCS4.14); and

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS4.27).

## How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as a number of positive strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

All young people had support plans which were reviewed every six months. Parents and young people were involved in the reviews and had copies of the plans. Plans could be further developed to be more 'child friendly' with information presented in a way which is meaningful to children and young people, with consideration to their particular communication style. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

Plans had a new format which provided a good level of information, though could potentially be improved by more specific information that would demonstrate progress, and how outcomes were measured. As people are only looking at the plans at the six-monthly review it may be difficult to identify exactly what has led to

progress (or lack of it). This will be better assessed once the plans are established and will be examined at the next inspection.

In the support setting it was difficult to assess how much the plans were actually used to influence support. They were not easily accessible during the times of outreach support when support staff were not at a 'base'. As young people and their families had established and consistent support from staff, they knew this did not impact on their support, however, it would be beneficial if staff had the plan in mind. **(See area for improvement 2.)**

There had been real progress in staff from the service attending multi-disciplinary meetings and discussion about young people's support. This had been of real benefit with managers continuing to encourage attendance through discussion with parents and other lead professionals.

### Areas for improvement

1. The service should develop support plans which are accessible to young people who may use alternative forms of communication to the written word.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

2. In order to guide the support offered, support plans should always be accessible to the staff providing support

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 because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

## 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
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	4 - Good



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