

Marchburn Children's Home Care Home Service

8 Marchburn Road
Aberdeen
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Telephone: 01224 699 656

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 July 2024

Service provided by:
Aberdeen City Council

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CS2007167560

About the service

Marchburn Children's Home is owned and operated by Aberdeen City Council as part of their social work services for children and young people. It is a modern, purpose-built building in the Northfield area of Aberdeen. Young people have spacious en suite bedrooms and homely communal areas maintained to a high standard. The house is central to various amenities and is on a good public transport route to access various areas of the city.

Marchburn state their ethos of care as:

'Marchburn aim to provide physical, intellectual and emotional support, advice and guidance that will enable young people to feel safe, cared for, nurtured, valued and respected. Marchburn ethos of care is one of 'hope' and 'belonging' for our young people. We strive to provide a healing environment where children and young people can achieve the best they can and have successful futures including positive relationships. The focus of our care is based on the importance of relationships and we adopt practice approaches that are sensitive to the needs of young people who have experienced early developmental trauma and insecurity of attachment. Aberdeen City Council has adopted a therapeutic approach to service provision within their Children's Homes that is based on Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). This approach aims to help Children and young people address difficulties with attachment (finding it hard to feel safe with parents or in primary relationships) and inter-subjectivity (finding it hard to give and take relationships).'

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 9, Wednesday 10, Monday 15 July 2024. Verbal feedback was given on Friday 19 July 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 young people who lived at Marchburn
- received feedback from two family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received verbal feedback from one social worker
- received feedback from one social worker MS form questionnaire.

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

- Staff were compassionate, and young people experienced warm, trusting and nurturing care in a homely environment. The team wanted the very best for the young people they cared for.
- There was significant importance placed on enduring relationships with young people who had moved on from the service, with staff continuing to be part of their adult lives.
- Young people's care and safety was supported by a responsive and knowledgeable staff team.
- Certain processes needed to be improved to ensure documentation demonstrated aspects of staffing levels and training.

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 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.

There was a good understanding of the individual risks present for each young person and a consistent approach in place to manage any concerns, and which included the team around the young person. This promoted their emotional and physical safety.

A culture of relationship-based practice, based on the principles of DDP/PACE, (Dyadic developmental psychotherapy/playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) supported a trauma informed response to young people and which was embedded across the whole team. This ensured there was a nurturing, relational, non-punitive approach to young people.

Young people were generally safe in the house. There was a warm and homely environment where staff used their relationships to promote safety and demonstrate care and concern. Where there were concerns about young people in the community, staff actively engaged with young people and other professionals to minimise risk and encouraged young people to keep in touch. At the time of the inspection a social worker, and the staff team were able to acknowledge the very considerable progress a young person had made, including their ability to keep themselves safe.

The children's rights service had provided opportunities for young people to have advocacy and to share their views about their living situation. Staff, and some parents also advocated for young people.

Staff stated that they received child protection training as part of ongoing core training and were clear what to do if they had a concern, however, it was not possible to track this and other important training that the staff team may have done. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

Staff were trained in Behaviour Support Strategies (BSS), however, did not restrain young people. A clear culture of relationship-based practice sought to reduce the likelihood of incidents. Risk assessment/safety plans provided meaningful and realistic responses to risk, that had a clear foundation in the strong relationships that staff had with young people.

Staff were compassionate, and young people experienced warm, trusting, nurturing and respectful care. This was evident in observation, discussion and questionnaire responses from staff. There was significant importance placed on enduring relationships with young people who had moved on from the service (some a long time ago) with staff continuing to be part of their adult lives. Familiar staff had ringfenced time to ensure that ongoing support was reliable. Welfare assessments to ensure young people understood their right to continuing care were not the responsibility of residential staff, however, had not been completed in line with the organisation's procedure.

Young people benefitted from the opportunity to be involved in various physical activities of their choice and were registered with healthcare services. Where young people made unhealthy choices, staff made every effort to educate them about risk and harm minimisation. Adolescent mental health services were accessed by young people when this was helpful and provided a consultancy service to support the team. A 'Looked after children' (LAC) nurse was also available to promote young people's positive health and wellbeing.

Medication systems supported safe practice. Further consideration should be given to young people taking a greater level of responsibility for their own medication, particularly when they are preparing for the next stages of their lives and will need to be confident in their medication regime.

Family and friends were recognised to be an important part of young people's lives. Both were welcome visitors to the house, with individual arrangements in place to ensure relationships outwith the service were supported in whatever way was best.

Young people engaged in conversation about their future lives and the support they need for this to be hopeful. Some young people had been accepted for college while others were being supported with education at home, and which had helped them to fill in the gaps, and exam results, from education they had missed earlier in their lives. This meant that young people's goals and ambitions were recognised and supported.

Young people were very much at the heart of their care and support. Their views and opinions were important, and the team listened to their needs and wants, including when these conflicted with the views of the adults around them. Reports were written sensitively and optimistically, without detracting from areas of concern, and reflected young people's views and wishes for their future lives.

The service did not have a formal staffing needs assessment, though the needs of the young people were well understood, and a flexible rota ensured there were sufficient staff. The service should develop a formal process of ensuring there are the right numbers of staff with the right skills to meet the needs of the young people. **(See area for improvement 2.)**

Areas for improvement

1. There should be demonstrable evidence that all staff have completed the essential training expected by the organisation.

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, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

2.

A staffing needs assessment should be completed to ensure the numbers, skills, training and experience of the team are appropriate to meet the needs of young people.

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

'My needs are met by the right amount of people' (HSCS 3.15).

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

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