

The Anderson High School Halls of Residence School Care Accommodation Service

The Anderson High School Halls of Residence
North Loch Drive
Lerwick
Shetland
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Telephone: 01595 745 920

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Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Shetland Islands Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2005112118

About the service

The Anderson High School Halls of Residence provides co-educational accommodation for up to 91 pupils who attend Anderson High School in Lerwick, Shetland.

The accommodation is in central Lerwick and was purpose-built, opening in 2018. All of the young people have single en-suite bedrooms in a spacious modern building adjacent to the school. There are multiple communal areas where young people can relax, study and enjoy meals. The halls of residence are close to a large sports and swimming complex and nearby shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Sunday 15, Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 September 2024. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 17 young people boarding at the service
- spoke with four parents
- spoke with three external professionals
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- had telephone conversations with social work staff
- received questionnaire responses from 16 students, 6 parents and 11 staff.

Key messages

- Staff understood young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities and were caring and responsive to these. Young people spoke about kind and caring house-parents.
- Staff worked well together. Staffing levels and skills were right to meet the needs and rights of young people.
- All young people should have a support plan within 28 days of moving into the service.
- The organisation should provide additional training in relation to neurodiversity and the impact of trauma. The local authority should engage with senior staff at the service to discuss the additional resources needed to meet the needs of these 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 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 evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and young people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Young people were kept safe. Staff understood their individual needs and vulnerabilities and were caring and responsive to these. Various systems including effective deployment of staff throughout the building and sign in/out procedures promoted safety. We observed encouraging, friendly and supportive interactions between the staff team and young people, and individual, person-centred support for students.

Staff had a good understanding of child protection procedures. They had all received appropriate training and always had the support of the senior team or manager. There were examples of good interagency working which ensured any concerns would be well-managed and young people protected. Young people told us they had a trusted adult they would speak with if they had concerns. They were clear that all staff had a role in caring for them and said they were kind and respectful.

Young people had personal plans which were based on assessed need, vulnerability and risk. We had heard lots of positive examples of young people being supported in a way that was right for them. However, this was not fully present in their risk assessment/support plans. Plans also took several months to complete. All about me interviews were a very helpful tool in the team getting to know young people, and ensuring young people's voices were heard, and their goals/wishes detailed. This information could be more proactively used to develop initial support plans. This would meet the need for all young people to have support plans within 28 days, a legal requirement (see area for improvement 1).

There were areas which could be improved to ensure there was a clear understanding of risks and proportionate support, particularly within the risk assessment. Some of the environmental risk was replicated and could form part of overall service risk assessment. This would make plans more focused and avoid repetition.

The boarders' handbook was clear that bullying would not be tolerated. A young person described how they had been empowered and supported to raise concerns, how well managed this had been and how they were fully informed about how the complaint was being managed. It was a clear example of how neither racism or bullying would be tolerated and the high level of support young people were given.

Young people experienced warm and nurturing relationships with the people who cared for them. Young people spoke about kind and caring house-parents. The staff team understood young people's individuality and talents, and we heard staff encouraging young people. Activities arranged by staff were about young people having fun and having positive memories of boarding which gave young people the opportunity to make friends and have fun. The environment offered opportunities for fun, activity and spending time with friends. There were areas for quiet activity, group activity, music and study, and to develop skills useful to their life after boarding. Parents were very positive about where their children lived.

There were mixed views from young people about how much their opinions and suggestions mattered. Some felt that decisions were pre-decided. We heard positive changes which had been made following student suggestions, though these sometimes took a long time to implement. Student meetings were held as a forum for discussion, however, were poorly attended. We discussed how the timing of meetings or a specific focus might support greater involvement from the student group.

Young people's health needs were generally well met. There were very good examples of specialist support and training being offered to the team. And also examples where further training would be beneficial to understand and respond to the specific needs of some of the young people. Medication procedures needed to be reviewed to ensure they complied with best practice. We heard that many young people were able to manage their own medication. It was positive that young people who were able to had this level of responsibility, however, this should be supported by robust risk assessment and safe storage (see area for improvement 2).

Boarding was well-sited to encourage young people to attend school and for strong relationships with the education team. Young people had great opportunities to be involved in community events and to be involved in the wider community. Boarders had the advantage of being closer (than from home) to sporting facilities and training. Groups (such as the eco group) had also been involved in community clean-ups. Some young people benefited from having jobs in the Lerwick community, whilst also being involved in fire festivals in their own communities. Overall, there were many great opportunities for young people to have a wide range of life enhancing experiences.

Leaders and staff were confident in their practice and well-supported. Staff worked well together and supported each other in their day-to-day tasks. There were formal structures of support such as team meetings, seniors' meetings and formal 1:1 supervision. The staff group unquestionably wanted what was best for the young people they cared for.

Staffing levels and skills were right to meet the needs and rights of young people. A staffing needs assessment provided a good overview of the needs of young people and the level of support they may need. In response to the increasing support needs of some young people, the manager had been proactive in requesting additional resources to ensure these needs could be met (though this may not be successful). External professionals acknowledged the efforts of staff to ensure smooth transitions for young people moving to the hostel. Complaints were taken seriously and were well-managed. The manager was responsive, open and transparent with people who had raised complaints. There was a clear audit trail which was helpful for reflection and assurance.

Staff were committed and enthusiastic. They had completed all of the core training expected by the organisation and were appropriately registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) with a training programme in place to ensure they completed the required qualifications. We recognised a desire to upskill the team and enhance opportunities for learning and professional development. The team would benefit from the opportunity to access more specialist training - particularly in relation to neurodiversity and trauma informed care. This would ensure a greater understanding of the support needs of some of the young people living at boarding, and therefore enhance their experience (see area for improvement 3).

Robust systems were in place to ensure that staff who were recruited had the correct values and skills and that appropriate checks had been carried out. The interview process could be enhanced to including young people from boarding in the process. This would develop their skills and ensure their voice was heard.

The service had identified the need to have a current development plan. There had been some positive developments from the previous plan, however areas that had been previously built upon had not been prioritised this year. Therefore, losing what could have been a positive focus moving into the new term. Goals in the plan would benefit from being clearer and 'smarter' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) in identifying what the service wished to achieve at each stage of a resident's experience, and wider developments within the staff team. There were opportunities for feedback from residents to be included in the development plan which would ensure their views informed developments and improvements within the service (see area for improvement 4).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that young people's individual support needs are understood and met, all young people should have a support plan within 28 days of moving into the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My personal 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 am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me" (HSCS 2.17).

2. Medication procedures should be reviewed to ensure they comply with best practice. This should include:

- risk assessment to ensure young people are competent to manage their own medication
- safe storage for all medication
- administration of medication by staff which complies with safe practice.

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) and "If I need help with medication, I am able to have as much control as possible" (HSCS 2.23).

3. In order to promote a greater understanding of the support needs of some of the young people living at the service, the organisation should provide additional training in relation to neurodiversity and the impact of trauma.

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).

4. The service should develop an improvement plan. This should identify goals which are 'smart' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and include the views of young people.

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).

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	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	4 - Good

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