

# Gaolach House Care Home Service

Perth

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
1 November 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Common Thread Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2005007437

**Service no:**  
CS2022000275

## About the service

Gaolach House is a care home for children, registered to care for a maximum of three young people. The service provides care and support for females, and has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since September 2022. The service provider is Common Thread Group.

The property is a large four bedroom farmhouse, with a substantial outdoor area, located near Stanley in Perthshire.

Each young person has their own bedroom and there is a large kitchen with dining space, along with well planned shared living areas.

At the time of inspection, there were two young people living at Gaolach House.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 October 2024 from 09:30 to 14:00, 22 October 2024 from 09:30 to 17:30 and 23 October 2023 from 09:15 to 16:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information from the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence. To inform the inspection, we:

- spent time with the young people living at Gaolach House
- spoke with seven members of staff including managers
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with three external professionals and one parent
- accessed feedback questionnaires.

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**

- Staff spoke confidently and respectfully about the young people.
- Young people's emotional and physical safety had at times been compromised.
- The service had not consistently collaborated with other agencies to support collective decision making.
- The service has had a number of crucial changes to staff at all levels.
- Staff were building effective relationships with young people.
- Education was being positively promoted for young people.
- The organisation needs to be clear about their model of care within their aims and objectives.
- The service was meeting the health needs of the young people.
- Transitions within the service had contributed to less positive outcomes.

**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?	3 - Adequate
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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?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. There were some strengths which had a positive impact, but key areas needed to improve.

There was evidence of caring and nurturing relationships between staff and young people, with staff speaking confidently and respectfully about the young people within a high quality living environment. However, young people's emotional and physical safety had at times been compromised at Gaolach House as there had been some notable and critical incidents, resulting in young people not always being protected from harm or feeling safe. The inspection also highlighted scope for development regarding the organisation's child protection processes to ensure the wellbeing of young people is safeguarded at all times.

The service recognised the importance of young people learning to manage risk, and had connections with external partners. Gaolach House had not, however, consistently implemented best practice in collaborating with other agencies to support collective decision making regarding risk management and restrictive practices. This had resulted in increased risk for young people, placing them in potentially vulnerable situations without the required support and strategies (requirement 1).

Staff were committed to minimising the use of restraint. To further support this, the service should ensure there is greater analysis of all incidents (including restraints), detailing primary and secondary strategies. This would encourage staff learning, ensure best practice is being observed, whilst identifying future ways of supporting positive outcomes for young people.

Stability of care was complex within the service with numerous crucial changes to staff at all levels, with the majority of staff in their probation period undertaking formal qualifications. There were some positive examples of young people identifying trusted individuals but a young person spoke of "lots of people (staff) coming from different houses and how it's then difficult to make good bonds". This created a level of uncertainty and unpredictability for young people.

Staff were building effective relationships with young people, committed to providing the best care possible with the skills and knowledge they had, with young people having opportunities to be involved meaningfully in decisions affecting them. There were examples of young people being involved in activities and outings, and the service intended to create increased links for the young people in their local community.

The service was meeting the health needs of the young people and were alert to young people's changes in mood. When young people were not keen to become involved with some services, staff continued to seek support and guidance from other professionals to inform their practice. The service intends to prioritise the input available from internal Common Thread therapeutic services to ensure young people's individual needs are supported, with greater opportunities to address key areas of risk.

Young people had not consistently been able to spend quality time with their family, however at the time of inspection, connections to family were being supported and facilitated, with future plans to encourage young people to spend time independently with friends. The service was committed to overcoming challenges to ensure young people's needs were central and their identities supported.

Education was being positively promoted for young people, with them attending mainstream school and successfully achieving qualifications. Young people received individually tailored support and a social worker commented that "the communication between school and house is a real strength".

To ensure young people's rights, and the organisation's commitment to continuing care, the inspection highlighted the importance of establishing and clearly reflecting this in planning and relevant policies as this was not present (area for improvement 1).

Personal planning and risk assessments provided some effective detail for getting to know the young people and identifying their needs. We discussed during feedback how this planning could be taken forward to guide staff practice, ensuring strategies and interventions are routinely undertaken and recorded. This would support young people to meet their goals, maximising opportunities for positive outcomes.

There had been a number of changes to leadership, bringing periods of instability and some complexity within staff dynamics, generating an absence of cohesion regarding approaches of care at times. Given these dynamics are a potential risk to positive outcomes for young people, it is important that the organisation ensures that care is safe and rights centred within an open culture (area for improvement 2).

The organisation acknowledged that Gaolach House was not providing the specialised service as described in their aims and objectives, resulting in a lack of clarity for the vision of the service. To ensure the best possible outcomes for young people, the organisation needs to be clear about their model of care, implement this consistently and update this within their aims and objectives, sharing this with relevant stakeholders (requirement 2).

External managers were involved in the house, playing an important role in safeguarding and monitoring young people's experiences and outcomes. The importance of ensuring formal documentation of investigations and reviews of practice was highlighted during the inspection to evidence safe decision making. The introduction of external support and supervision by the organisation was welcomed and, although in the early stages, this was a clear pathway to effectively supporting staff to develop, reflect and feel better equipped to meet the needs of the young people.

The organisation's approach towards transitions had resulted in young people experiencing trauma, impacting on their wellbeing and contributing to young people's outcomes being adversely affected. As a result, we have made an area for improvement related to admissions and matching (area for improvement 3).

The service and organisation as a whole were fully aware of the importance of a stable staff team to support young people to build trusting relationships. The team was newly forming, with consistent and safe practice still developing. Care Inspectorate guidance will be shared with the service to support them to ensure the service is responsive at all times, identifying key times where additional support may be needed.

The manager had taken steps towards ensuring that staff training was monitored and recorded. We did, however, identify the need for role specific training and key training areas for the staff team to ensure they were supported to meet the individual needs of the young people (area for improvement 4).

Several areas of service improvement were evidenced through the improvement plan, suitably focused on improving outcomes for young people. Additionally, quality assurance processes were established to monitor aspects of service delivery, gathering feedback from young people and stakeholders. To further drive improved outcomes for young people and to promote reflection and learning, these processes could be enhanced by formal auditing from external leaders.

## Requirements

1. By 20 January 2025, the provider must make make improved provision for the health, welfare and safety of young people.

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

- a. act jointly with external partners to collectively identify and manage risk
- b. ensure multi agency involvement regarding applying/altering/removing restrictive practices
- b. ensure that where risk is identified, young people's plans are continually reviewed and updated, through multi agency involvement.

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 2011/210)

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

If I am supported and cared for by a team or more than one organisation, this is well coordinated so that I experience consistency and continuity (HSCS 4.17).

2. By 31 January 2025, the provider must ensure greater clarity regarding the services being provided at Gaolach House.

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

- a. ensure there is a clear model of care that guides the care and support for young people
- b. update Gaolach House aims and objectives, sharing this with key stakeholders.

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 2011/210)

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

I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed (HSCS 4.23).

## Areas for improvement

1. To support young people's progress into adulthood, the provider and service should ensure all relevant policies reflect their commitment to providing continuing care. This should include, but is not limited to policies, aims and objectives, admissions guidance and placement agreements.

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

My human rights are central to the organisations that support and care for me (HSCS 4.1).

2. To support young people achieve the best outcomes, the provider should ensure that Gaolach House has a consistently open culture, supporting therapeutic and stable approaches of care.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) 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) and

My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well (HSCS 3.19).

3. To support young people to have the best outcomes, the provider should ensure an effective admissions and matching process is in place, determining the capability of the service to meet the needs of the young people coming into the service and those placed in the service.

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

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

4. To support young people to have the best outcomes, the service must ensure that all staff have undertaken training specific to their role and to the needs of the young people.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) 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).

## 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 young people's wellbeing, the provider should ensure a consistent approach to reporting child protection concerns, including alerting the Care Inspectorate to notifiable incidents.

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

**This area for improvement was made on 6 September 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

There has been a consistent approach to reporting child protection concerns and alerting the Care Inspectorate of notifiable incidents. Additional guidance was provided regarding child protection processes during this inspection.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support young people's wellbeing and development, the service should ensure staff are knowledgeable regarding the support that young people are entitled to through to adulthood.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 September 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

An area for improvement was made at this inspection specifically in relation to continuing care.



## Previous area for improvement 3

To support continuous improvement and meet young people's changing needs, the service should establish an analysis of incidents.

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 6 September 2023.**

### Action taken since then

This inspection has identified ways that this could be further enhanced to truly analyse and provide learning.

## 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 children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	3 - Adequate
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	3 - Adequate
7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	3 - Adequate

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