

Aspris - Croekwood School Care Accommodation Service

Carlung Estate
West Kilbride
KA23 9QE

Telephone: 01294 823 292

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 October 2024

Service provided by:
Aspris Scotland Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2010011131

Service no:
CS2018369573

About the service

Croekwood is provided by Aspris Scotland Ltd, and is registered as a school care accommodation service; with the provider's education campus being within a neighbouring North Ayrshire town. Croekwood is registered to provide accommodation for up to five young people aged 8 to 18.

The service is situated in a rural location in North Ayrshire close to the town of West Kilbride. The house is spacious with five bedrooms, two lounges and a kitchen/dining room. The service sits within its own grounds and has outbuildings that are currently unused.

It is possible for young people to visit local towns using local bus services.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection type which took place on 24th October 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 using the service
- Spoke with three staff and two members of management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- Young people we spoke with stated they felt safe in the service.
- The service staff utilised good links with health professionals in the community for good outcomes for young people's physical and mental health.
- The staff ensured young people could maintain contact with family and friends and people of importance to them.
- Young people were supported to maintain attendance at schools and colleges.
- Young people benefitted from new experiences such as trips to Blackpool.
- Following a change of manager, there was inconsistency in the team.

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 the service as good as there are a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. These strengths will have a significant positive impact on people's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements are required to maximise wellbeing and ensure that people consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Young people we spoke with said they felt safe in the service with the staff. We observed young people interacting with staff. They appeared relaxed, confident and comfortable in staff's presence and we noted positive exchanges between them. Staff we spoke with had a good level of knowledge of the individual needs of the young people.

Some young people had access to independent advocacy. Others had this support available but chose at this time not to engage with it. This access to independent support ensured young people's voices and opinions could be heard.

Concerns young people had raised relating to staff conduct and practice had been investigated by the service provider, and the outcome explained to young people. This helped assure young people that their concerns would be taken seriously and ensure they could maintain trust in the service staff and manager. Safeguarding matters were being responded to timeously and in full discussion with the young people's social workers.

The service had made a commitment to reducing the use of restrictive practices and we were pleased to see the incident of restraint had reduced. There had been no restrictive practices used for several months. We did note that follow up interviews were not being recorded for all incidents. Whilst we recognise that some young people choose not to engage in these, the service provider should review these practices and explore efficient ways to gather young people views.

Whilst young people we spoke with described warm nurturing relationships with staff, not all staff believed this approach to be consistently shown. Some young people declined to speak with us during the inspection, however they had completed questionnaires for us. There were no concerns of this nature indicated by young people. In discussion with staff it was clear there was an inconsistency within the staff group in relation to how efficiently they felt the recent change of manager process had been completed. There was no apparent impact on the outcomes for young people relating to this. We do recognise, however, that there is some inconsistency within the staff team and have identified the exploration and resolution to this by the management team as an area for improvement. See area for improvement 1.

Young people spoke of the fun they experienced on trips to Blackpool and the festivities they enjoyed in the service. One such festivity was the services own 'Croekfest' where invites were sent to the young people in Croekwoods sister services. This provided young people opportunities to meet with peers for a positive event and enjoy having fun together.

The house provided a homely, comfortable and safe space for the young people. There was space provided within the two lounges to join in combined activities, such as board games, or individual pursuits, such as arts and crafts. During our visit the service had begun to prepare for the forthcoming Halloween celebrations and the house was decorated accordingly. These activities provided the young people with the opportunities for fun with staff and one another.

Through listening to young people's individual interests, aspirations and preferences their self worth and identity were promoted. Accessing activities they were skilled in or liked to participate in encouraged their interests and talents. Similarly young people's rights were promoted through staffs actions. Young people's rights in respect of family meetings, privacy and continuing care, for example, were being promoted and assured. Through this support some young people were choosing to remain in the service through continuing care arrangements. Young people's rights, with regard to continuing care, were therefore being respected.

Young people's care plans were SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timeous) with some specific, measurable goals set. These plans were being regularly reviewed. The staff also developed 'young people friendly' plans to engage young people in the discussions around their care at a level appropriate to their needs.

As stated above, there had been a change in management through the year. Subsequent to this, some staff had anonymously commented negatively in our survey questionnaires. Being anonymous, we were unable to follow up on these comments. However, some social workers also suggested that the change in manager could have been completed 'more sensitively'. We believe these comments relate to the needs of some of the young people.

This matter had also been identified within the service's own external quality assurance processes. We have identified an area for improvement relating to this, as stated previously.

Moreover, the service's quality assurance processes were well implemented and had identified some areas of development for the service. Not all of these had been completed between quality assurance visits however, and we have identified this as a second area for improvement. See area for improvement 2.

The service staffing level assessment was good. We commented to managers that it could perhaps be more explicit in relation to staff skills and why particular staff would support particular young people at times, however there was a good basic format available to view. This provided a good record of the consideration of staffing levels to meet young people's needs and how to address any shortages.

The manager described to us how the service is promoting the Promise through consideration and review of the use of language, support for family time, meeting with siblings, continuous care and taking young people's views into account. We saw recorded evidence of this through the various means employed to gather young people's views, such as the plans around transitions for example.

Areas for improvement

1. The service provider should develop a plan to review the staff group, promote good working relationships, nurture positive staff morale and promote a safe environment for staff to raise issues and be proactive in being involved in service development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have agreed clear expectations with people about how we behave towards each other, and these are respected' (HSCS 3.3) and 'I experience a warm atmosphere because people have good working relationships' (HSCS 3.7).

2. To support children and young people's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure timely action is taken in response to quality and audit activity. This should include, but not be limited to, timely action on identified areas of improvement from audit activities.

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	4 - 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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