

Aberlour Options - Borders Care Home Service

Melrose

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 July 2025

Service provided by:
Aberlour Child Care Trust

Service provider number:
SP2010011118

Service no:
CS2010272787

About the service

Aberlour Borders Options is a short break service for children with additional needs. The service operates from a detached bungalow in an established residential area with its own garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 July from 11am to 7pm. 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 three family members of young people using the service and had one response to our pre inspection survey. We spoke with 10 staff and management and had 10 responses to our pre inspection survey. We observed practice and daily life, reviewed documents and spoke with four external professionals.

Key messages

- Children and young people had positive relationships with staff.
- Children and young people were kept safe due to robust safeguarding practice.
- Staff had a good understanding of children and young people's needs and how they communicate.
- Children experienced therapeutic stable care and restrictive practice was not used.
- Parents had high levels of confidence in the service.
- The setting created a warm and homely environment.

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

Children and young people were kept safe and benefitted from knowledgeable staff that understood their needs. Staff were trained in safeguarding, and a robust approach was taken in instances where concerns were recognised. The service should ensure that protection concerns are notified appropriately to the care inspectorate.

Children and young people experienced therapeutic and stable care which supported their emotional wellbeing. The service had a no restraint policy and children and young people were proactively supported to minimise concerns and de-escalation strategies which promoted their emotional wellbeing.

Children and young people experienced warm, nurturing relationships with staff. Staff had a good understanding of children and young people's needs, and care plans clearly outlined how they should be supported. The service has reviewed its approach to staff training which will support staff to better understand the needs of young people using the service.

Parents had a high degree of confidence in the service; one parent told us "The team are flawless in what they do for our son". One parent told us that "the staff know my child very well" another described the service as "fabulous." External professionals also provide consistent positive feedback about the quality of care provided.

The setting had been improved since the last inspection, in particular the garden which was now more accessible to wheelchair users. The house had warm atmosphere with a family feel. One parent told us "It is a nice set up; it feels like a home." Further improvements are planned to the kitchen area and redecoration of children's bedrooms.

Care plans had been revised using board maker symbols which had increased children and young people's ability to participate in their care planning. Staff provided positive feedback on the new plans and how they described children and young people's needs.

Children and young people's health needs were well met. Staff were appropriately trained and confident in managing complex health needs and practice in medication was robust. The service had been advised to make some changes to recording practice and procedures for signing in medication during the inspection.

Communication with parents was effective, the service made calls prior to an overnight stay to ensure they were up to date with any changes to children and young people's needs. Parental feedback was sought by the service and plans were in place to further enhance engagement.

High-quality person-centred plans were in place in a format that children and young people could engage with. This ensured that needs and aspirations were maximised through an individualised approach to care planning.

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 ensure children are fully engaged with their care and support the service should improve its approach to care planning.

This should include but is not limited to, improved use of in house toolkits to engage children in their care planning.

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

"I am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me" (HSCS, 2.17).

This area for improvement was made on 14 September 2023.

Action taken since then

New care plan format that is child centered and can be used to support children and young people to participate in care planning. Care plans regularly audited to ensure that these are up to date and reflective of need.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To improve children's health and wellbeing the service should review how it promotes healthy eating within the service.

This should include but is not limited to increasing the availability of homecooked meals and promoting healthy snack options.

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

"I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables and participate in menu planning" (HSCS, 1.33).

This area for improvement was made on 14 September 2023.

Action taken since then

Review of food provision in the service to promote healthy choices. Children and young people's food preferences updated with healthy options highlighted. Children and young people encouraged to make healthy choices and home cooked food provided. Children and young people able to express choice regarding menu planning.

This area for improvement has been met.

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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