

Sunnyside House Care Home Service

Cumnock

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 June 2025

Service provided by:
East Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000142

Service no:
CS2007167896

About the service

Sunnyside House is a care home service registered for up to six young people. There was a temporary variation in place for an additional seventh young person to reside in the service. At the time of inspection, there were six young people residing in Sunnyside. The service is situated in Auchinleck, and there are local amenities close by, or within driving distance.

Sunnyside House is a detached, single-storey house in a residential area. It has six en-suite bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room and a dining room with adjoining kitchen. There is an additional gym, which is not currently in use, and an education room which is in the process of redecoration. The house has its own office, parking and landscaped garden to the rear.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. The inspectors visited on 17 and 18 June 2025 between 12:00 and 20:00.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings and registration information. We also reviewed information submitted by the service and information gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- met with five young people using the service
- spoke with three family members
- spoke with 10 members of staff and management
- spoke to four external professionals from social services, health, education and advocacy
- reviewed survey responses received from young people, family, staff and external professionals
- observed practice and daily life in the house
- reviewed key documents.

The provider of this service is a corporate parent, with statutory responsibilities to look after and accommodate children. This may mean that the duty of care for children and young people on an emergency basis, or with highly complex needs, is their highest safeguarding priority.

In these circumstances, our expectations focus on outcomes, and evaluations remain identical to all other providers. We may, however, provide some additional narrative in the body of the report to reflect the impact of these duties, should it be relevant to this particular service.

Key messages

- The service was providing care to some young people under continuing care arrangements, and supported young people who had moved on from the service.
- Young people were supported to keep in touch with, and spend meaningful time with, people important to them.
- Staff were committed to building positive relationships with young people.
- Young people's risk assessments required to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound) and ensure appropriate supports were in place.
- Recommendations from admissions and matching assessments required to be implemented in practice.
- Quality assurance processes should be developed to ensure ongoing evaluation of children and young people's 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

This inspection considered our Key Question 7: How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing? We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

We found that there were risks to young people's safety, with some young people stating that they felt bullied at times and did not feel safe. This compromised young people's relationships with peers, the atmosphere in the home, and young people's emotional wellbeing. We found that staff recognised the level of risk and worked with other agencies. There were, however, few effective strategies in place to manage or mitigate these risks, therefore a high level of risk continued to be present for some young people. This needed to improve to safeguard young people (see requirement 1).

The service provider's recording system for incidents was not aligned with The Promise relating to young people's rights. Recording systems were unclear and child protection procedures were at times compromised. The service had also not notified the Care Inspectorate appropriately, and on other occasions failed to notify these concerns. We have asked the service provider to review this practice to ensure alignment with best practice and young people's rights (see area for improvement 1).

Young people's identity was supported which included keeping life story boxes for all young people. Young people were also supported with access to advocacy support. We found that the staff team promoted these relationships, and we were assured that young people's views were heard.

Staff were committed to building positive relationships with young people, and had a good understanding of young people's individual needs. The majority of young people stated that they had good relationships with staff, and identified staff they would seek out for support. We found that staff made strong attempts to provide a level of care which supported young people's recovery and building their resilience. The level of risk present for some young people, however, had impacted on staff's ability to do this, in order to achieve best outcomes for young people.

The house was well-furnished, maintained to a high standard and homely. It was pleasing to see that there was a plan to repair and refurbish young people's bathrooms to ensure respect is reflected in the quality of environment for young people. Due to the service regularly operating over its registration capacity, the gym was not in use, and the education room was in the process of redecoration, at the time of inspection. This meant there were at times a lack of space for activities, or to spend individual time with young people.

Staff worked hard to meet young people's mental and physical health needs. Visits from school nurses and specialist health teams assured young people's health needs were assessed. Staff were proactive in contacting health services for young people when needed. The service had introduced an educational psychologist to support staff's understanding of young people, and had future plans to introduce a speech and language therapist. This support was proving beneficial to support relationships and understanding of young people.

Staff spoke about the importance of supporting young people to keep in touch with, and spend meaningful time with, people important to them, ensuring both young people and family were supported with this. Young people and family members also commented on the support they had received from staff which included emotional and practical support.

Young people's individual talents and interests were promoted, and involvement in activities was supported by staff. This included sporting activities, holidays and outings which meant young people were supported to access new experiences to enjoy. Whilst staff tried hard to ensure that young people experienced spontaneous fun, this was more of a challenge due to the needs of all young people, staffing levels and limited communal living spaces.

Young people were supported with their learning including attending school, college or employment which meant young people were supported to achieve.

There were some young people who had decided to remain in the service after turning 16 years of age, under continuing care arrangements, and this was supported by the service. Young people experienced warm relationships with those caring for them and this included ongoing relationships after young people had moved on. This meant young people were supported into adulthood in line with The Promise.

We found that decisions around admissions and matching required more consideration, and plans to be implemented, to support young people to meet their needs. We made an area for improvement in our report dated 18 January 2024 for admissions and matching. This has not been met, and has been replaced with a requirement, to ensure the matching process and ongoing placement reviews consider whether the service can effectively meet the needs of young people (see requirement 2).

Some quality assurance processes were in place which included management and external management audits. External management oversight provided an analysis and audit of the service. Monthly management audit checks were in place, but we did not find there to be continuous and robust evaluation of the service to evaluate and monitor all aspects of service delivery. These required to be further developed to include analysis and identify further actions, to ensure continuous evaluation of young people's outcomes, experiences and their setting. We have identified this as an area for improvement (see area for improvement 2).

Requirements

1. By 15 October 2025, the provider must ensure that young people's health and wellbeing are fully assessed with an overview of risks and effective strategies.

To do this, the provider must:

- a) Ensure that all young people's risk assessments identify the relevant risks.
- b) There are clear primary and secondary strategies identified to support young people.
- c) Risk assessments are regularly reviewed with the most up-to-date information.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1) and 5(1) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SS1 2011/210).

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 because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm' (HSCS 3.21).

2. By 15 October 2025, the provider must ensure that the admissions process considers the ability of the service to be able to meet the young people's needs and keep them safe.

In particular, the provider must:

- a) Ensure there is a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the young people using the service, underlining how the service will meet these needs and evidence regular reviews of the assessment.
- b) Ensure there is an assessment of the impact on young people in the service when a new admission is considered.
- c) Ensure the service has the staff skills and training to meet the needs of the young person.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SS1 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

Areas for improvement

1. To support young people's health and wellbeing, and to ensure their rights are being upheld, the provider should ensure that young people are supported to understand their rights, and the recording of incidents reflects this.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am supported to understand and uphold my rights' (HSCS 2.3) and 'My human rights are central to the organisations that support and care for me' (HSCS 4.1).

2. To promote high quality care and support for all young people within a culture of continuous improvement, the provider should ensure that effective quality assurance processes are in place to promote improved outcomes for 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).

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

In order to ensure young people have the service that is right for them, the provider should ensure that decisions about admissions are fully informed by a robust and clearly evidenced assessment and matching process.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I am in the right place to experience the care and support I need and want' (HSCS 1.20).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement is no longer in place and has been incorporated into a new requirement under How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

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?	3 - Adequate
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	3 - Adequate

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