

# Fernbank Children's Home Care Home Service

Peterhead

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
22 July 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Service no:**  
CS2003000300

## About the service

Fernbank is a large, detached traditional house situated in the coastal town of Peterhead, close to all local amenities. The service is provided by the local authority and is registered as a care home for a maximum of four children or young people.

The service's written statement of aims is 'to provide a safe, caring, stable, secure, and happy environment for young people experiencing difficulties' and 'to provide the highest possible standard of care'.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 8 and Friday 11 July 2025. 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 living at the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback via MS questionnaires from one parent, six external professionals and seven staff.

## Key messages

- Young people experienced warm, trusting, nurturing relationships from a skilled, experienced and consistent team who were thoughtful, nurturing and trauma informed in their approach.
- Young people were very much at the heart of their care and support. The team listened to their views and opinions and considered these to be important.
- Staff worked alongside family members to ensure the young people spent time with people who were important to them and family relationships were strengthened and promoted.
- The staffing needs assessment needed to improve and be used more effectively.

## 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 |
|--|---------------|

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 young people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people experienced relational nurturing care, which promoted their emotional and physical safety. There was a good understanding of the individual risks present for each young person, strengthened by support planning and risk assessment. There was a warm and homely environment where staff used their relationships to promote safety and demonstrate care and concern. Feedback from external professionals was extremely positive.

There was generally a nurturing/non punitive approach to young people which was supported through staff's understanding of the impact of trauma. Staff took an individualised approach to each young person and looked beyond behaviours when thinking about what support was needed. This meant young people experienced support that was meaningful to them.

Young people had access to external advocacy, though not all chose to use this. Often young people preferred the support of adults they knew well, such as social workers or people within the staff team who they trusted to represent their views. This meant that young people felt listened to.

Young people were protected by effective child and adult safeguarding policies and procedures and a programme of training which ensured people understood their responsibilities. An experienced team was supported by the manager and on call arrangements which ensured they could access guidance and support if needed.

A clear culture of relationship-based practice sought to reduce the likelihood of incidents. Risk assessment provided meaningful and realistic responses to risk.

Young people experienced warm, trusting, nurturing relationships with those caring for them. Most of the young people were complimentary about some or most of the staff team, however, some staff and young people felt that some young people were not always treated with the regard or understanding they should be by some staff. This was discussed with the manager at verbal feedback following the inspection.

The house was well-furnished, homely, and maintained to a good standard, to ensure respect was reflected in the quality of environment. Resources in the house and garden reflected the needs, interests and wellbeing of young people.

Young people's legal and human rights were respected. The service had clear admissions and matching procedures and considered the importance of transitions and lifelong connection when young people were moving on from the service. This demonstrated a commitment to 'The Promise' and an understanding of the importance of longstanding relationships.

Young people had access to a range of activities and were encouraged to develop new interests which helped promote self-esteem and confidence. Young people's physical and mental health were given priority. All were registered and attended general healthcare appointments. More specialist support was available where needed, and supported by strong links with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who worked alongside the team to develop improved understanding of young people and develop

effective support strategies.

Young people had access to a range of activities and were encouraged to develop new interests which helped promote self-esteem and confidence. Their goals and ambitions were recognised, with individualised support to plan for their future lives.

Staff worked alongside family members to ensure the young people spent time with people who were important to them, both within and out with the house. Family members who had visited felt welcome within the house and were positive about the support both they and their child received.

Discussion with young people, the staff team and external providers described young people who were very much at the heart of their care and support. The team listened to their views and opinions and considered these to be important. Documentation was sensitively and optimistically written while remaining honest about any areas of concern.

All young people had individualised care plans and risk assessments. These were well-balanced and clear, which ensured that staff had access to the right information to support young people in an informed way. A review of the wellbeing survey would be beneficial to ensuring the language is more 'Promise' focussed and statement about progress more individualised.

A staffing needs assessment was in place but did not provide the necessary information to ensure there was the right number of staff with the right skills, to support the young people. While this did not impact on outcomes this needed to be improved and used more effectively. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

## Areas for improvement

1. In order to ensure that staffing levels and skills are right to meet the needs of young people, the provider must develop an effective formal staffing needs assessment.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14); and

'My needs are met by the right amount of people' (HSCS 3.15).

## 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?        | 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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