

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Aspire - Balgray Cottage School Care Accommodation Service

Balgray Cottage
Balgray Road
Kilbirnie



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: Aspire Scotland Ltd

Service provider number: SP2010011131

Care service number: CS2015340457

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	5	Very Good
Quality of environment	5	Very Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4	Good

What the service does well

A culture of mutual respect has been developed within the service, with staff demonstrating empathy and understanding towards the young people in their care. All young people are supported to achieve educationally. Good outcomes have been achieved for many young people through staff's commitment to supporting the development of confidence and skills.

What the service could do better

Recording of work undertaken could be improved. The service could also involve young people in personalising their files and monitoring their own development. The service could also provide more frequent and robust supervision to staff.

What the service has done since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of the service.

Conclusion

The manager has worked hard to create a positive and caring atmosphere, but had insight into areas for development and was committed to developing the service.

1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 8 October 2015.

Balgray Cottage is a five bedded school care accommodation resource just outside the town of Kilbirnie in Ayrshire. The service is run by Aspire, who also run a further four services, all in the Ayrshire area. An associated educational resource, Radio City, is based in Kilbirnie, and young people of school age either attend this resource or a mainstream school, dependent on their needs.

The mission statement of Aspire states they aim to "make a difference for the children and young people in our care through promoting positive outcomes".

The accommodation comprises of:

- Five bedrooms, one of which is en suite
- Shower room shared by two of the other bedrooms
- Bathroom shared by the other two bedrooms
- Additional downstairs toilet/bathroom
- Two large lounges
- A large kitchen
- A dining room
- A laundry room
- Large gardens maintained to a high standard
- An outhouse in garden which is planned to be used as additional space for young people for activities, i.e. arts and crafts.

At the time of inspection, the service was fully occupied.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 4 - Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

We inspected this service on 6 June 2016 between 4 pm and 7 pm and on 7 June 2016 between 9.30 am and 6.30 pm. A further visit was carried out on 17 June 2016 to give feedback to the service.

At this inspection, we:

- Looked around the house;
- Met with the manager;
- Met with five staff members;
- Met with one young person;
- Reviewed one questionnaire completed by young person;
- Sampled two case files;
- Reviewed admission process for one young person;
- Read the providers' supervision policy;
- Sampled two supervision records;
- Reviewed folders in relation to participation, young people's meetings, team meetings, and incidents within the house;
- Observed interaction between young people and staff.

Following inspection, we sought feedback from other stakeholders, such as social workers and family members.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service

performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: No

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

At the time of inspection, the service had not completed a self-assessment. This was due to an administrative error. It was agreed with the service this would be completed following discussions with the staff group and young people.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

One young person was spoken to directly about the service. This young person spoke positively of the staff group. Some issues were raised about dynamics with another young person and about care planning. These matters were raised with the manager of the service, who was aware of the issues and advised she would discuss further with the young person to resolve.

Another young person completed a questionnaire. They strongly agreed that the service was performing well in all areas. The young person commented:

"The staff listen to me and give me good care".

Taking carers' views into account

We spoke with two family members of young people presently accommodated at Balgray Cottage. They both spoke highly of the service and the staff group, and both advised that communication with staff was good. One family member

advised:

"They have more staff and because of that young people get more one-to-one time".

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service."

Service strengths

At this inspection, we found the performance of the service was very good for this statement. We spoke with young people, staff, the manager and external agencies. We also looked at the service's participation information and minutes of young people's meetings.

We found the service had a commitment to involving young people in developing the service. Regular young people's meetings were held, and there was evidence of staff supporting young people to make their views known.

A major strength of the service was the promotion of positive educational attainment for young people. Some young people who had previously been out of full-time education had been supported to attend the provider's educational resource, Radio City. Young people were transported to this resource and supported during their education by members of residential staff, meaning there was a very good link between the education and accommodation aspects of the service.

Staff had also worked hard with young people who had left school to source other opportunities. This support included giving young people "mock interviews" prior to them attending interviews for employment or training. This led to young people successfully commencing work placements in areas they were interested in.

There was good evidence of young people being involved in positive social activities, both individually and collectively. One young person had been supported to attend singing lessons, which had the outcome of helping development of confidence and skills. Other young people had been supported to attend football training and the service had been proactive in linking some young people into football clubs. This had the additional benefit of supporting young people to develop positive relationships in the local community.

Young people had attended various activities as a group, such as Blair Drummond Safari Park, Go Ape and other places which were chosen by the young people. There was a full programme of activities during the recent Easter holidays. Young people spoke positively of these experiences.

We found that young people had been supported to develop their independence skills by the service. For example, the cook had worked with a number of young people to develop their ability to cook healthy meals, which will be an invaluable skill in the future as they move on to more independent living. The service had plans in place for young people to take part in food shopping, which would support them to develop their budgeting skills.

Young people had also been involved in planning different outdoor projects; for instance, planting flowers in the garden and keeping chickens. These initiatives were in their early stages but were evidence of young people being included in developing the service. As well as having an educational benefit by supporting young people to carry out research before implementing the respective plans, it also supported young people to develop a sense of responsibility and team working.

Young people have been supported to personalise their own rooms, and they have also been consulted about furnishings within communal areas. This has supported young people to feel at home within the service.

The provider has a comprehensive participation policy and runs a young people's participation group across all its services. One young person from each service is encouraged to attend this group.

Discussions within this group have been aimed at increasing the participation of young people in the service. For instance, this group has been instrumental in reviewing young people's involvement in the recruitment process, and ensuring that young people have more of a say in staff recruitment. Currently, young people ask questions by video to prospective candidates. The participation group is developing plans to change this, with young people to be involved in the recruitment decision making process.

The service had begun the process of asking young people their views about the service through questionnaires, and the manager advised this feedback would contribute to the development of a service plan.

Areas for improvement

The care plans of young people were not personalised to any great extent. This was discussed with the manager, who acknowledged this was an area for development. The benefit of increased personalisation of care plans is to increase ownership from young people over their plan and a sense of working together with staff to achieve agreed outcomes (refer to recommendation 1 under this statement).

The provider should progress with plans already underway to improve young people's role in the recruitment of staff. The service should also continue to collate feedback from young people to inform the service development plan.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. Aspire should involve young people in the personalisation of their own care plans.

National Care Standards, care homes for children and young people - Standard 4: Support arrangements.

Statement 3

“We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.”

Service strengths

At this inspection, we found the performance of the service was very good for this statement. We spoke with young people, staff, the manager and external agencies. We also reviewed case files, supervision records, team meeting minutes, and information relating to any incidents within the service.

We observed very good relationships between young people and staff. These were characterised by open discussions and good humour. Young people were comfortable in discussing any concerns with staff.

Care plans had all been reviewed within appropriate timescales. Chronologies of significant events were also in place for all young people.

We spent some time reviewing admission processes and found these were mainly working well. In most cases, appropriate information had been shared with the service prior to admission and where this had not been the case, the service was proactive in trying to get necessary information. Considerable work had been done with one young person to ensure their transition to the resource went smoothly. Young people spoke of being made to feel welcome by the service.

There were good risk assessments and risk management plans for all young people. These plans were proportionate to the individual circumstances of each young person. They also included a guide for staff intervention, based on best practice and the background of the young person.

We found good evidence of appropriate, supportive and empathetic crisis intervention with young people. This approach not only helped young people through their crisis but also further strengthened relationships between them and staff.

Language used within reports and case recordings was positive, focussing on strengths of young people. This is important as it is an indication that young people are valued and respected within the service.

There was good communication between the service and other professionals, including those working in health, education and social work. This was aided by the provider's networking site called Gateway. This site allows for workers to update developments and achievements of young people as well as intervention with young people. Social workers and other professionals are able to have access to this network. This allows for a "hub" where professionals can share information. We found that, while this network was helpful, it was not used as a substitute for face-to-face discussion, and there was regular verbal communication between the service and other agencies.

The manager and other staff had a very good knowledge of young people in their care. Team meetings included a standing item looking at the needs and safety of young people, ensuring that all staff were up to date with any developments. There was a culture of staff getting to know young people; one new member of staff had been prioritising reading case files and developing relationships with young people.

In the 2016/17 inspecting year, the Care Inspectorate is scoping child sexual exploitation (CSE) practice in children and young people's services. This is part of our contribution to 'Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation' and focusses on frameworks of CSE practice, staff understanding and care planning outcomes.

The service has a child protection policy in place. A separate policy specifically in relation to child sexual exploitation had been developed, including a toolkit for staff to use when working with young people at risk. Specific training in relation to CSE was being held for all staff at the time of the inspection.

Managers and staff members spoken with demonstrated a good grasp in regard to identifying the risk and vulnerability indicators of CSE and evidence a clear understanding of the actions required of them in order to protect young people from potential or further harm. There was evidence of staff effectively

implementing the procedure to protect young people in their care.

The case tracking sample evidenced that young people at risk had been appropriately identified. There were care plans in place to maximise the safety of these young people, and the service regularly reviewed care planning strategies in conjunction with other agencies.

Areas for improvement

While regular keytime was occurring for young people, the recording of this was not as frequent as it could have been. This was discussed with the manager, who acknowledged that this was an area for improvement and was something which would be addressed. The primary focus should be on staff inputting information more frequently into the Gateway network.

While the service had an outcome tracker, linked to wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) this had not been fully utilised by staff. It was also still a document completed by professionals. We suggested to the service that developing the outcome tracker so that there is greater engagement with young people in identifying their own outcomes, achievements and challenges would support the growth of young people's self-awareness as well as promoting improved self-esteem and confidence. If this was done, it would support young people to identify outcomes achieved and areas for further development (see recommendation 1 under this statement).

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. Aspire should ensure young people are supported to identify their own outcomes and areas for development at regular intervals.

National Care Standards, care homes for children and young people - Standard 4: Support arrangements.

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service."

Service strengths

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Areas for improvement

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 2

“We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected.”

Service strengths

At this inspection, we found the performance of the service was very good for this statement. We spoke with young people, staff, the manager and external agencies. We also looked around the house.

We found the accommodation was spacious and well presented. There were two large living rooms, which allowed for different groups of young people to socialise dependent on their age or interests.

While only one bedroom was en suite, shared bathrooms or shower rooms were available. The service was mindful of safe care and ensured that all young people were appropriately dressed while in communal areas.

The service has a security alarm and all doors are locked at night. The night shift is a waking nightshift, which ensures young people are kept safe at night, as staff are available to address any risk factors.

The service is in a rural location, around two miles from Kilbirnie and along a country road not serviced by public transport. This can present its own risks to young people; for instance, when trying to go back to the service if it is dark or the weather is poor. Staff are very mindful of this, and ensure they try to provide transport to young people where it is assessed that there may be a potential risk.

Some young people did not have mobile phones, and the service recognised this could potentially increase risk as the service would not be able to get in contact with them. This was discussed with the manager, who advised she was proactive in having dialogue with social workers over this issue, to ensure, where possible, young people had a means of communicating with the service and vice versa.

Areas for improvement

The service should continue to develop plans to make maximum use of the environment and involve young people in this process.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service."

Service strengths

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Areas for improvement

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

“We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.”

Service strengths

At this inspection, we found the performance of the service was very good for this statement. We spoke with young people, staff, the manager and external agencies. We also looked at supervision and training records, the provider's supervision policy and team meeting minutes.

We found the service had a high staffing ratio. Shift patterns meant that there were three staff on shift (as well as the manager) between 8 am and 12 midday; four staff on shift between 12 midday and 8 pm; three staff working between 8 pm and 12 midnight and two staff on duty between 12 midnight and 8 am. The manager explained shift patterns worked this way out of recognition of the need for young people to be supported with education and activities during the day, but also because bedtime routines could lead to some tension, so the manager felt it was important to have at least three workers on duty between 8 pm and 12 midnight. The three staff members working at this time are all trained in therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI). This means that if any incidents occur, no young person or member of staff is placed at unnecessary risk as staff members are trained in crisis management.

All staff are registered or in the process of registering with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). While some staff did not have the basic qualifications as required by SSSC, the provider was ensuring they completed these qualifications as a matter of priority.

There was a good training programme for new staff, which included areas such as child protection, health and safety and TCI. In addition, some staff had attended additional training specific to the young people they were working with, for instance focussing on specific health conditions. One of the features of the training programme was that this was often organised across all Aspire

services, meaning there was good integration and sharing of ideas across different services.

Team meetings were mandatory for all staff and occurred once a week. The manager had scheduled these meetings for the mornings to make it easier for night shift workers to attend. Night shift staff were therefore fully integrated into the staff team.

The provider has a six month probationary period for all staff. This offers reassurance that action can be taken if performance issues arise for any new member of staff.

Areas for improvement

While the provider has a supervision policy in place, this states that supervision should only occur every four months. We found that recording of supervision was basic and in some instances there was a lack of detail about discussions in supervision. This was discussed with the manager, owner and external manager, who agreed that improving the frequency and quality of supervision was important. We feel that this is especially important as this is a new service with a new staff group with differing levels of experience. The provider advised they would review the level of supervision available to all staff. This matter should be reviewed at the next inspection.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 4 - Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service."

Service strengths

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Areas for improvement

Please refer to quality theme 1, statement 1.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

“We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide”

Service strengths

At this inspection, we found the performance of the service was good for this statement. We spoke with young people, staff, the manager and external agencies. We also looked at questionnaires sent to stakeholders.

The service has begun the process of seeking feedback from stakeholders. Questionnaires had already been sent to external agencies, with questionnaires to young people and family members set to follow.

The manager planned to organise a team development day in the near future. The service was planning to create a development plan, based on feedback from stakeholders and the outcome of the team development day, within the next six months. We felt this was a reasonable timescale, given the service has only been open since October 2015.

We found the owner of Aspire was a regular visitor to the service. There was evidence of management audits, for instance of young people's meetings, to assess attendance and the quality of meetings.

The provider has recently introduced auditing of each service by a manager independent of the service managers. This is in its very early stages so the outcome of this added quality assurance measure will be assessed at the next inspection.

Areas for improvement

The service should continue to develop quality assurance processes, including gathering feedback from stakeholders, and ensure that information gained is used to inform the service development plan, which should be completed by the end of 2016.

Grade

4 - Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

9 Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

To find out more

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