

## Aspire - Woodend Farm School Care Accommodation Service

Dyke Farm  
Symington  
Kilmarnock  
KA1 5PN

Telephone: 01563 830092

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 19 October 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Aspire Scotland Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2010011131

**Care service number:**  
CS2016348976

## About the service

The service provides school care accommodation for five young people and is situated in a rural location close to Ayr and Kilmarnock. The service is run by Aspire Scotland Ltd; who also provide their own educational resource, Radio City, based in Kilbirnie.

The service building comprises of five bedrooms, two sitting rooms a large dining kitchen and staff office areas.

The service website states that the '...social integration for children will be supported through a combination of active farm living and participation in wider social activities and interests.'

## What people told us

We met with all five of the young people and spoke individually with three of them during this inspection. All of the young people spoke positively about the care they experienced in the service.

We noted that the young people had very good relationships with the staff and appeared comfortable and confident in their interactions with them.

During our discussions with the young people they spoke highly of the staff and of the support provided to them with regard to their health and well being, education, activities and social interaction.

One young person described the relationship they had with staff, and the quality of the environment, in comparison with previous homes; stating, 'its like a 5 star hotel here'.

We also spoke with the parents of one young person. They offered positive comments about the service generally and considered it the 'right place for their child at this time'. However they did hold the view that the staff should be more pro active in promoting the progress of their child and in reporting on the successes.

We also spoke with social workers to two of the young people. The social workers also gave very positive views of the service and staff.

One social worker told us of the 'much improved circumstances' and of the changes in the young persons well being; particularly in education and behaviour management.

Another told us of the ' huge improvements' in the young person; and offered the view that this improvement was 'down to the staff at Aspire'. They described a 'passion' to see the young people achieve positive outcomes by service staff.

## Self assessment

No self assessment was requested of the service during this inspection year.

We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork in order to assess how they monitored service provision.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

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	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was providing a very good level of care to the young people.

It was clear that the staff worked hard to build and maintain positive, nurturing relationships with the young people. The committed staff team also assisted the young people to maintain positive relationships with those people important to them in their home communities through ensuring contacts arrangements were met.

Access to general and specialist health services were maintained and young people were continuing to receive support essential for their emotional health and well being. Positive outcomes were being achieved through this support with young people stating they were feeling better prepared and more able to manage difficult emotions. One young person expressed gratitude toward the staff for their support in helping turn around their previous behaviours.

We noted the high expectations that staff had for the young people and that they shared in the young people's individual aspirations. Examples of this were found in young people achieving several awards in their chosen sporting activity; one having been selected to join the national team.

Young people who had previously disengaged from education were being supported to attend education; in some cases through college or in attending the services own education provision. One young person was also attending college and progressing very well toward accessing an identified career path.

Young people were also being enabled to access community groups and to participate in work experience placements which led to employment. These outcomes further developed young people's self esteem, confidence and positive social interaction outwith the home.

Well considered care plans and informed risk assessments linked targets to the wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) identified in the Scottish Government Policy Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).

Young people were encouraged and empowered to participate in reviewing their own progress and outcomes by completing the assessment tool "the wellbeing web" with the support of staff.

The providers Gateway system provided up to the minute access for the team around the child - social work, education and health professionals - to receive updates efficiently and effectively. Social workers commented on the high value of this system in keeping track of the young people's progress and in being enabled to respond quickly to identified need.

Prior to the inspection we were aware of a high number of reported incidents where young people were safely held. A review of these incidents had been conducted and the views of the young people sought in relation to this. Following our discussions with young people, staff and social workers we learned that there had been a reduction in the number of safe holds and heard how staff were appropriately intervening using de-escalation techniques; using the safe holds as a last resort.

We noted that some care plans had no specific timescales attached and would recommend that to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of the plan that they are developed in accordance with SMART principles with clearly defined targets and timescales recorded. We have made a recommendation in relation to this matter. (see recommendation 1)

We also found some gaps in recorded information relating to some young people's health assessments. On further inspection of this we learned of some young people's reluctance to be involved in the assessments. However the manager and staff should ensure records of all information relating to the young people's health and well being are maintained; to include, where appropriate, clear accounting for gaps in the information held.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. To Care plans should adhere to SMART principles and provide clear goals and time frames within which young people can measure the progress they are making.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services : Standard 6.Support arrangements (for those schools which provide specialist education and care).

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

We found the quality of the environment at Woodend Farm to be very good.

The service home comprised of a very spacious well-kept house with large sitting rooms for group living activities. It also provided space for young people to take time alone if they required it. The young people's bedrooms were also spacious and well furnished appropriate to their preferences and needs. The young people had decorated their personal space with pictures and personal items that reflected their personality, interests and preferences. This was effective in helping settle young people in the service and young people we spoke with stated they were comfortable and felt safe.

Very good attention to detail had created a homely feel to the shared living space whilst maintaining essential health and safety standards.

The large kitchen included a dining area where staff and young people could sit together and eat their meals. We noted that this promoted a harmonious group living environment and encouraged positive group interaction.

To promote social and recreational activities for young people, staff transported them to community facilities and activities. This was particularly important given the rural setting of the service and the needs of the young people. Safety checks were completed on service vehicles to ensure the safety of staff and young people whilst travelling.

In keeping with the service aims and the farm theme the service had acquired rabbits and chickens for the young people to look after. The chickens were housed in a coop adjacent to the main building and professional animal husbandry advice had been sought to maintain correct care. This promoted responsibility in the young people for the keep of the chickens and one young person was keen to show us the yield of eggs.

Whilst recognising the benefits that keeping the animals brings to the young people, and the advice the staff had sought in relation to this, we highlighted the need to maintain up to date advice and guidance from veterinary practitioners and professionals in ensuring animal health, environmental and health and safety considerations are met.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

We found the quality of staff group to be very good during this inspection.

We inspected documentation relating to the recruitment of staff and noted a robust recruitment process. Previous references were provided and followed up on and disclosure checks completed. Staff's experience and skills were assessed for effectiveness of supporting the young people and individual staff skills strengths highlighted.

Staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and either held the appropriate qualifications, or were engaged in a programme to achieve qualifications relevant to their role. All staff are required to join the PVG scheme and we saw records confirming that this was the case.

We spoke with staff new to the service and learned of the induction programme that they completed on joining. All new staff undertook a shadowing period with an experienced staff mentor to assist them and to support them in their role as residential child care workers. Staff told us of the benefits during the induction period in understanding the processes of care, the recording processes and familiarity with the service Gateway intranet system.

The training programme included a good range of essential training including fire safety, food safety, equality and diversity, training in a programme in managing challenging behaviour, Health & Safety, child protection, medication handling, case file recording and first aid. This assisted staff new to the service by ensuring consistency in the staff group in essential aspects of care.

The homekeeper was also trained in child protection and aspects of the behaviour management programme in recognition of the particular role of the homekeeper and the positive relationships formed with young people. This ensured consistency in the staff approach to young people.

Staff understood their role and expectations of them, were aware of best practice and demonstrated a very child centred approach to meeting young people's needs.

Regular team meetings provided opportunities for regular discussions on meeting the young people's needs and of assessing risks. Reflective practice was encouraged and the sharing of information and knowledge of the young people's particular needs ensured consistency of care.

Staff's knowledge and experience was relevant to the support needs of young people and, where staff noted an area for development, they sought training opportunities to address these. Staff had attended training in communication methods for young people with particular needs and this facilitated ease of communication in discussing care plans, activities, and daily wishes and concerns. This training had also been provided at a basic level to the young people to promote inclusion and consistency for the young people. Consequently, young people had been enabled to form very positive relationships with their key teams through this support.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

## Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was achieving a very good level of management and leadership.

Leadership values were promoted through the revised management structure of the service and the delegation of responsibility to staff. Staff were given responsibility for the quality assurance of particular aspects of the service and these in turn quality assured by the Senior practitioners then managers and external managers. This provided development and advancement opportunities for staff whilst promoting the services core values through responsibility and accountability.

A review of safe holds had been conducted following a recommendation by the Care Inspectorate and young peoples views on this matter sought and analysed. Learning from this exercise was conveyed to staff and, for example, the need to ensure all staff were aware of all young peoples individual crisis management plans emphasised. Young people stated that this would contribute to their feeling of safety and security. Given that this review was a relatively recent process we will review the outcomes of this during the next inspection.

The service had conducted a survey of stakeholders views. At the time of the inspection an analysis of this survey had not been completed. We discussed this during feedback to the service and understand that this work is to be completed imminently and we will review this during the next inspection.

As stated in the Quality of environment section the service has plans to develop the grounds to the house and introduce farm animals - such as chickens and horses. We discussed these plans with the quality assurance / external manager and the various considerations to be taken in relation to health well being and health and safety. These plans were in their early stages and we will review these also at the next inspection.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

### Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

### Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

### Inspection and grading history

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



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