

The Good Shepherd Close Support School Care Accommodation Service

The Good Shepherd Centre - Close Support
Greenock Road
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Telephone: 01505 864501

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:

The Good Shepherd Close Support

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About the service

The Good Shepherd Close Support service is a registered school care accommodation service providing residential care and support for up to nine young people, aged between 12 and 18.

The premises consist of a close support house for up to six young people and a cottage accommodating up to three. The service is situated in a rural setting near Bishopton, Renfrewshire.

Young people arrive in the service both from the community - placed by local authority social work departments - and from the secure accommodation service (Good Shepherd Centre Bishopton) which is located in the same grounds. The close support service, therefore, shares management, staffing, the majority of policies and procedures and some facilities with the secure service.

All young people in the close support house have an en-suite bedroom and share a communal lounge, dining kitchen and additional sitting/games rooms.

Additional facilities the young people have access to include a gym, fitness suite and outdoor sports pitch.

The service provider is The Good Shepherd Close Support, a private company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

The service's overarching purpose is to provide a 'positive, life-changing experience to young people through individual care, education and skills development.'

The service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2014.

What people told us

Prior to the inspection we issued questionnaires to the young people. Within the returned questionnaires we received were statements such as:

'I feel safer than most placements as no-one can walk into my room at night'.

'I feel safer to open up and talk to staff'.

'I was encouraged to have a fresh start and see a future for myself' and,

'Having a locked front door has made me feel safer as if I was in residential care I would have left the house and not cared about the consequences.'

During the inspection we spoke with some of the young people experiencing care in the service. These young people told us,

'This place has done a lot for me. They have supported me with everything. Staff are absolutely brilliant, amazing. They support us if we're in a bad place. Ask us to chill out. They have a heart of gold.'

Another young person stated that being at the service had been a good experience. They had the view that the staff were good and they had good relationships with them. The staff were said to be easy to get on with, had good personalities, a sense of humour and were kind.

Young people also described staff as supportive, respectful and protective without being risk averse.

However, one young person was of the view that the Close Support unit was 'basically secure'; comparing it to the secure service.

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 wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staffing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	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 wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be performing to a very good level for this key question through demonstrating major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people. Any areas for improvement we noted we considered would have minimal adverse impact on young people's experiences and outcomes

In observing staff and young people's interactions we could see that maintaining very good relationships was a key strength in the service. A consistent staff group provided high levels of stability and continuity in providing care and support. Whilst employing flexible approaches to situations the staff kept to established boundaries in relation to behaviours. The relationships between staff and young people were characterised by warm responses, positive regard and genuine affection

The young people we spoke with described various ways in which staff promoted dignity and privacy. One example of this was found in the descriptions of the service's improved search procedures and the subsequent reduction in frequency of these. An inclusive element of these improved procedures was the development of a visual tool for young people who have additional communication needs. This aligned with the major focus on reducing restrictive practices which was a characteristic of the service development.

The young people were also provided many opportunities to express their views and to influence their care and the service procedures. These opportunities included house meetings, a pupil council and food committee and external opportunities through participating in events concerning the secure pathways standards and the independent care review.

Young people had access to a wide range of activities such as; biking, gardening, social outings, walks, board and computer games, television, a fitness suite and outdoor sports area and creative arts and media facilities. These activities were enjoyed both individually and in groups.

Service staff were found to be strongly supportive of family relationships. Family meetings with young people were supported in various ways; such as through staff maintaining contact by telephone to provide additional support if necessary.

Young people were also supported and encouraged to maintain their education, work or volunteering activities. The successes and achievements of young people were celebrated and promoted. Some young people had obtained various recognised awards such as Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir awards.

Maintaining young people's wellbeing through safeguarding procedures was also well established. The young people we spoke to reported feeling safe and had very good awareness of who to speak with should they have any concerns. The staff similarly demonstrated awareness of their responsibilities in this regard. This extended to keeping young people safe whilst using IT and accessing social media.

Most staff were able to clearly articulate the services model of practice. All staff had however attended training in the relevant subjects; trauma, attachment, nurture and ACES for example.

All were well informed of the move to reducing restrictive practice and the reasons behind this.

Through the very good relationships nurtured with young people, and the implementation of very well considered interventions and strategies, young people were being supported to achieve very good outcomes. Staff were observed implementing strategies recorded in care plans to very good effect; supporting young people to address upsetting situations positively.

We found relaxed and settled atmospheres within the houses with positive interaction noted between young people. Whilst there had been some disagreements characteristic of group living, these had been addressed very well by young people with staff guidance.

The administration and handling of medication was generally managed safely and effectively with young people accessing the medication they require at the right time. There were very minor record keeping issues that we brought to the attention of the service and these were noted for attention. Young people had access to primary health care services and specialist services if required.

From the previous inspection, and identified areas for improvement, there was acknowledgment of an improvement in the quality of the food. Young people's views had been gathered in relation to the food and these views remained varied. We found the quality of the home made food we observed being provided to the young people to be impressive.

A good variety of fresh fruit and vegetables was readily available to young people. They had increased opportunities for meal preparation. One young person reported being very happy that they could choose and prepare their own meals.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be performing to a very good level for this key question through demonstrating major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people. Any areas for improvement we noted we considered would have minimal adverse impact on young people's experiences and outcomes

The service conducted robust quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures. Gathering young people's views to inform these was central to their effectiveness.

Staff were also actively involved in the quality assurance process. We heard of numerous opportunities for staff to take part in various projects and groups aiming to effect positive changes.

The service improvement plan was a regularly reviewed dynamic tool with clear evidence of progress and achievements.

The senior managers to the service were regular and frequent visitors to the houses to meet with the young people and staff. They were clear about their specific roles and responsibilities.

Similarly the Board members were regular visitors with direct contact with young people. The visits by Board members and senior managers provided young people with further means to ensure scrutiny and accountability of the service staff and managers.

In discussions with, and observations of, staff's interactions with young people we noted that young people were well informed about what their rights were and what they should expect regarding their care. This was done through daily interactions and regular discussions of what the Health and Social Care Standards mean in practice, for example.

A development within the service during the previous year was regarding changing the culture of the language used. Staff were noted to be actively addressing the use of institutional language. Staff induction was being referred to as introductory training, contact as meeting family and units as houses, for example. Through this change the service and staff were aiming to show respect to young people's views on how to refer to such matters.

This change in culture was related to the direction of service development. The senior management team had been very successful in explaining the rationale for this change. This was reflected in the staff's view of this change and their enthusiasm for the service development plans.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be performing to a very good level for this key question through demonstrating major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people. Any areas for improvement we noted we considered would have minimal adverse impact on young people's experiences and outcomes

Most staff felt staffing levels sufficient most of the time. They were of the view that they had time to spend meaningful time with young people, developing positive, supportive relationships. Some staff commented on the demands of paperwork and record-keeping and felt there was excessive duplication.

In discussions with the staff group we found high levels of motivation, with good morale and good relationships leading to supportive team working. Staff turnover was found to be relatively low. Subsequently the service had a number of experienced and skilled staff allowing for the development of stable relationships.

House managers daily meetings included discussions on staffing levels. This allowed the service to be responsive to changing need, sometimes increasing staffing levels in response to young people's need for support meeting family for example. Managers could describe some other systems in place to monitor and review staffing levels and the various factors they took into account. However, there was no specific staffing level assessment. We suggested the service should look to develop a robust, effective system in line with the guidance available from the Care Inspectorate. This would provide regular assessment, ensuring the process is clearly documented and reflective of the full range of needs and risk in addition to staff skills mix.

Staff recruitment was found to be fully in line with Safer Recruitment practices. On-going SSSC registration for staff was monitored through a Human Resources system and alerts were set to notify when staff's registration was due. These measures aimed to ensure young people's safety. Introductory training was comprehensive and provided a very good general awareness of young people's needs prior to staff commencing practice.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be performing to a very good level for this key question through demonstrating major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people. Any areas for improvement we noted we considered would have minimal adverse impact on young people's experiences and outcomes.

Relationships with people of importance to the young people were facilitated and maintained through the support of the staff. Parents were welcomed to the service or arrangements were made enabling young people to meet with family in local amenities; whichever was preferred or considered more appropriate. This inclusive approach extended to ensuring telephone and internet facilities were available to maintain regular contact; again promoting and maintaining these important relationships.

The service staff worked at forming effective links with local employers and colleges, and with training and employment organisations such as Skills Development Scotland. We heard how some young people had benefitted from accessing local resources such as football teams, the army cadets and diet clubs. The staff maintained a useful list of community resources and facilities to offer young people the opportunities to begin, and forge, involvement with these and other life enhancing experiences.

Assisting young people to visit local places of interest and facilities enabled some to participate in volunteering opportunities. Leisure and recreation facilities were accessed as a group also, with trips to theatres performing pantomimes enjoyed by the group, for example.

The young people also spoke of the benefits they enjoyed through access to the secure unit's outside sports park and the fitness suite.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be performing to a very good level for this key question through demonstrating major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people. Any areas for improvement we noted we considered would have minimal adverse impact on young people's experiences and outcomes

The service employed a very impressive, robust, structured assessment and planning processes.

Strong, comprehensive assessments were completed under co-ordination of the services Wellbeing team. These clearly identified young people's strengths and needs in consultation with the young people, social workers and families.

The Wellbeing team also provided associated specialist input where appropriate. Young people participated in the review of their plan through one to one discussions with key workers and regular formal review meetings. Young people's well being was further promoted through adherence to robust assessment of risk.

The young people's assessments informed high-quality plans compiled to SMART principles.

These included clearly defined outcomes and the strategies to achieve these. Staff encouraged young people to express their views and aimed to ensure these were at the heart of the plan.

In discussion with the service managers we recognise that they have recognised there is potential for streamlining of some service recording documents. We would also suggest the service continue to explore how they can ensure that plans are accessible to the diverse group of young people they care for.

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

The service provider should review the close support environment in relation to the Health and Social Care Standards and best practice. In doing so, there should be a focus on developing the therapeutic environment that fully meets the needs of the young people residing there.

This area for improvement was made on 4 March 2019.

Action taken since then

There was reconfiguration of rooms with rooms for meetings with family refurbished.

Sensory rooms were introduced to support the needs of young people who benefitted from such a resource.

Previous area for improvement 2

The service provider should ensure the Good Shepherd Close Support unit is staffed appropriately at all times to meet the needs of young people as identified in their care plans. Staffing levels must be informed by an ongoing assessment of risk and need to determine the levels of support required for young people.

This area for improvement was made on 4 March 2019.

Action taken since then

Although not developed a staff level assessment tool the processes existed for doing so. Staffing levels were said to be good. We suggested the service could develop a formal process for staff assessment and recording.

Previous area for improvement 3

The service must ensure that young people should have more spontaneity in relation to meal choices and food options; to include access to food preparation and cooking, where assessed as appropriate

This area for improvement was made on 4 March 2019.

Action taken since then

The service had introduced practices such as staff and young people sharing cookery sessions together and the young people were also fully involved in meal planning.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community	5 - Very Good

How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	5 - Very Good

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