

Daldorch House School - Short Breaks Service Care Home Service

Arran House One
Daldorch House School
Sorn Road, Catrine
Mauchline
KA5 6NA

Telephone: 01290 551 666

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 June 2023

Service provided by:
The National Autistic Society

Service provider number:
SP2004006215

Service no:
CS2012314346

About the service

Daldorch House School -Short Breaks Service is a care home service provided by The National Autistic Society (NAS). The service is located in Arran House One and an upstairs self-contained flat in Arran House Two within the Daldorch House School campus in Catrine, East Ayrshire.

The service is registered to provide a short break service to a maximum of 4 children or young people with a primary diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. An additional young person can be cared for on a longer term basis within Arran House Two. The service can provide care to young people aged between eight and 21 years. The age range can be extended to 25 years for young people who have already been receiving the service, have reached the age of 21 and would benefit from further support.

Arran House One is a semi-detached house within a secure campus enclosed by a perimeter fence. The house has four individual bedrooms and a shared bathroom. There is an open plan kitchen, dining and living room and access to a garden. The upstairs flat in Arran House Two was being renovated.

The campus has extensive indoor and outdoor facilities that are accessible to the young people, including a playground area and access to a sensory room and larger kitchen within the main school building.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 June 2023. 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:

- reviewed responses to surveys from six staff and four external professionals
- spoke with one parent
- spoke with seven staff including the manager
- spoke with four external professionals
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Young people were kept safe and protected from harm
- Young people benefitted from warm, nurturing relationships with those caring for them
- Young people's individual educational needs were promoted and supported
- The service benefitted from strong leadership
- The service should take steps to improve staff's understanding of the impact of trauma
- Young people's plans should be developed to be more specific and outcome focused

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?	4 - Good
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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?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Young people were kept safe and protected from harm by staff who knew them well. Risk assessments were up-dated and used to keep young people safe. Parents and external professionals were confident that the service was able to keep young people safe. One parent told us, 'it is a very secure environment...I am never worried about him when he is away.'

The service fully implemented best practice in child and adult protection. All staff reported feeling confident in this area of practice due to the training they had received and the support from leaders.

Not all young people had support from independent advocates and many staff were unaware of this service. To better support and champion young people's rights the service should ensure that staff have greater knowledge of advocacy services. The registered manager recognised this as an area of development and we were confident that she would progress this.

All staff advised that restraint practice should never be used. Staff were trained in a low arousal, non-aversive approach to managing distress. All staff spoke about these methods being successful in managing the behaviours of the young people they cared for, preventing the use of restraint. External professionals spoke positively about the service's ability to support young people with very complex needs in a caring nurturing way without the use of restraint practice.

Children and young people enjoyed warm, trusting, and nurturing relationships with those who cared for them. Staff developed effective communication styles with young people and this supported the development of respectful relationships. Staff's knowledge of the young people meant that planned activities were suited to their needs and interests. We saw young people willingly participating and having fun.

Staff's knowledge and understanding of young people's history and the impact of trauma was limited. The service should take steps to improve this area of practice. This is to ensure young people are supported by staff who are well-informed about trauma and use approaches informed by best practice guidance (see area for improvement 1).

We were told of plans to re-furbish the house improving the overall quality of the environment. We highlighted the importance of progressing these plans to provide a more homely and nurturing environment for the young people.

Young people were involved in decisions about their care as much as possible. Staff used a variety of communication methods to ensure they had choice. Families were actively involved in decision making when young people were less able to express their views. An external professional felt that this was a particular strength of the service, advising that young people were very much involved in decisions.

We heard of strong links between staff and family members. There was a flexible approach to this, based on family members choice. A family member stated that communication from the service reassured them about the care provided to their child.

A particular strength of the service was supporting young people to attend education and supporting individually tailored education experiences. The service shared strategies of support for young people with education establishments to provide a more positive and consistent approach to their care. The service had successfully supported young people to re-engage with education after a significant period of time without education, thus recognising and encouraging them to reach their potential.

Young people's dietary needs were well supported. The service planned in advance for young people and had a clear understanding of each young person's likes and dislikes. Diets were limited, however this was due to the complex needs of the young people. We heard of various ways to encourage a more varied diet. Young people had the opportunity to be involved in preparation and cooking to increase their independent skills.

The service benefitted from strong leadership from the registered manager and team leaders. The manager had created a supportive and empowering culture where knowledge and understanding was shared across the team to seek the best possible outcomes for the young people.

The service had significant staff shortages and this was impacting on service delivery. We heard that not all young people received their short breaks as planned and at times arrangements were changed at short notice. We heard of the additional pressures that this caused for some families and how it impacted on outcomes for some young people. We found however that due to the strong leadership, the impact of the staffing shortages was minimised. The registered manager always made sure that there was a mix of experience and skill on each shift to best meet the needs of young people. Staff felt supported and were motivated and committed to the young people. The service were actively recruiting in an attempt to improve service delivery.

We saw that admission and matching processes were closely followed and robust consideration was given to matching young people and ensuring that staffing levels were assessed and could be met. Young people were always supported by a member of staff they knew well.

A particular strength was the training and knowledge staff had of autistic spectrum disorder which meant that young people were understood and appropriately supported by those caring for them.

To further enhance the level of care provided, the service should take steps to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of 'The Promise.' This is to ensure that young people who attend the service receive the best possible care in line with the Scottish Government's pledge (see area for improvement 1).

There were several effective quality assurance measures in place that had been used to identify areas for development of the service. The manager was actively seeking to progress these areas of development. While on inspection we noted minor medication recording errors. We saw clear procedures that had been implemented to mitigate the risk of future errors.

Young people's personal files had detailed information about their care needs and risks, however we found that their care plans did not clearly identify intended outcomes and the actions required to support young people to reach those outcomes. Care plans would benefit from being more Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) to provide a more focussed approach to achieving positive outcomes for young people (see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To enhance the care provided to the young people, and ensure they are supported by staff who are well-informed, using approaches informed by best practice guidance, the provider should ensure staff have access to training in trauma informed practice and information about 'The Promise,' the Scottish Government's pledge to care experienced young people.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled' (HSCS 3.14).

2. To further support young people to achieve positive outcomes, the provider should ensure that care plans are outcome focussed and comply with SMART principles. Care plans should clearly record agreed actions to achieve positive outcomes for young people, how these will be measured, how achievable these are and within which timeframe.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15) and 'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected' (HSCS 1.23).

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

Managers and staff should ensure that children and young people's plans are up to date and include a description of any specific action to be taken by staff in order to meet young people's needs and choices and to get the most out of their stay.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that; Users of care services should have a personal plan which is right for them because it sets out how their needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices. (HSCS 1.15)

This area for improvement was made on 3 September 2019.

Action taken since then

Area for improvement is partially met, however area for improvement 2 within this inspection includes improvements to personal plans ensuring they are SMART and outcome focussed.

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?	4 - Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	4 - Good
7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	4 - Good

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