

The Linksfield Residential Service

Care Home Service

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 July 2025

Service provided by:
Barnardo's known as Barnardo's
Scotland

Service provider number:
SP2003003405

Service no:
CS2003000246

About the service

The Linksfield Residential Service is a Barnardo's service, registered to provide a care home service to a maximum of six children or young people. It is fully commissioned by Aberdeen City Council. The service operates from a large, detached bungalow in Aberdeen with ample outdoor space for games and activities and easy access to all the amenities offered in a major city.

Linksfield state their mission 'to meet the identified needs of each child and young person in our care, thereby helping them to overcome their difficulties, fulfil their potential and achieve the best possible outcomes'.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 June 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 using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.
- reviewed survey responses from young people, family members, staff and external professionals.

Key messages

- Young people experienced relational nurturing care. There was a warm and homely environment where staff used their relationships to promote safety and demonstrate care and concern.
- Young people experienced warm, trusting, nurturing and respectful relationships with those caring for them. All of the young people were very complimentary about the staff team.
- There was a huge importance placed on ongoing relationships, and support for young people who had moved on from the service.
- There were gaps in (some) staff training which needed to be addressed.

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
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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?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good as the service demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people.

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 - enhanced by support planning and risk assessment. Young people were safe in the house, and the community. There was a warm and homely environment where staff used their relationships to promote safety and demonstrate care and concern.

There was a nurturing, non-punitive approach to young people which was supported through staff's trauma informed approach. Staff had completed training to support their understanding of trauma. The organisation had a commitment to staff completing DDP/PACE training, however, a number of the team were waiting for the next available date to complete this. **(See area for improvement 1.)** Reflective practice was promoted to support understanding of a trauma informed response.

Young people were made aware of the role of the Children's rights officer to ensure their views were listened to and considered to be important in any discussion and decisions. Staff and other professionals (including solicitors and appointed safeguarders) also advocated for young people to ensure their voices were heard.

Policies, procedures and training supported staff to safeguard the young people in their care. Staff knew what would concern them and always had access to a senior member of staff to support discussion and decisions about safeguarding matters.

Risk assessment and safety plans provided meaningful and realistic response to risk. A clear culture of relationship-based practice sought to reduce the likelihood of incidents, meaning physical restraint had not been needed for a long time. Some of the team were awaiting refresher training on either the physical and/or theory elements of Crisis aggression limitation and management (CALM), with their current training out of date. **(See area for improvement 1.)**

Young people experienced warm, trusting, nurturing and respectful relationships with those caring for them. This was evident in discussion with young people, in observation, discussion and questionnaire responses, and the atmosphere of the house. All of the young people were very complimentary about the staff team.

Young people's positive physical and mental health was promoted. They were supported and encouraged to attend appointments with healthcare professionals, were involved in exercise and benefitted from healthy options at mealtimes. Some young people also shopped and cooked their own meals developing useful skills for their future lives.

The staff team understood the importance of promoting and encouraging important relationships and friendships. Young people had access to a range of activities and were encouraged to develop new interests which helped promote self-esteem and confidence, and to develop and sustain friendships outwith the house. Goals and ambitions were recognised and supported and young people had the opportunity to have new experiences, and were doing well in education and employment.

There was a huge importance placed on ongoing relationships, and support for young people who had moved on from the service. The team had varying views about how well young people were prepared for the next stages of their life however, these came from a position of nurture and wanting the best for young people. Family members of young people who had moved on from the service provided exceptionally positive feedback to the Care inspectorate.

Young people were engaged in their care, their support and their support plans. They were encouraged to attend important meetings and to share their views and opinions. This ensured they were fully involved in important decisions and that they felt included and listened to.

Areas for improvement

1. The organisation should ensure that staff complete core and refresher training within expected dates. This may involve increased planning from outwith the service to ensure 'next available' training dates fall within the timescales for recertification or refresher training, or the commitment of the organisation to equip the entire staff team with enhanced understanding of a particular framework of practice.

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, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

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?	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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