

[DRAFT]



# Care service inspection report

Full inspection

## Safe Base @ Balnacraig Care Home Service

Craiglunie  
Faskally  
Pitlochry



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: Balnacraig School

Service provider number: SP2010011127

Care service number: CS2013321869

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.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

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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		N/A
Quality of staffing		N/A
Quality of management and leadership	5	Very Good

### What the service does well

Young people in this service are protected from harm and receive support to have healthy lives. Staff support them to learn how to regulate their behaviour when they are feeling under stress and overwhelmed. They provide stable, nurturing care in times of crisis and transition. Young people have lots of opportunities for activities, exercise and fresh air. The service has a clear sense of direction, very effective leadership and uses a wide range of quality assurance methods to ensure continuous improvement.

### What the service could do better

The areas for development we have identified are largely about building on existing strengths and improving some processes and systems. They include:

- raising staff awareness of child sexual exploitation
- ensuring that all significant events are notified to the Care Inspectorate.

### What the service has done since the last inspection

The most significant change has been the addition of new premises providing a service for another young person. This also involved setting up a new staff team. The service has also continued to identify learning from all young people's placements to ensure continuous improvement.

### Conclusion

This care home continues to perform to a very high standard. The committed and able staff team provides safe, consistent, and nurturing care. The service's approach is catered to meeting individual young people's needs, working in partnership with others involved in their lives, and achieving stability in times of crisis. There is a clear focus on reflection and learning to bring about continuous improvement.

# 1 About the service we inspected

Safe Base @ Balnacraig is a care home service for up to two young people aged between nine and 16. The maximum length of stay is 28 consecutive days (though some young people have stayed longer by agreement with the Care Inspectorate). The service provides short-term placements for young people experiencing circumstances such as family crises, placement breakdowns and risk-taking behaviour.

Following a variation to the conditions of registration in October 2015, the service now consists of two care home premises located in Perth and Kinross, each with a place for one young person. Both homes (Craiglunie and Eden House) are in rural settings, about a mile from Pitlochry and Blairgowrie respectively. They are single-storey cottages with one en-suite bedroom for young people and additional staff accommodation. Craiglunie has a communal lounge, dining room and kitchen as well as extensive grounds and a garden. Eden House has a kitchen, lounge diner and a garden.

The service has a manager, house/development manager, house manager and two teams of residential care staff.

The provider is Balnacraig School, a private company limited by guarantee and administered by a board of directors. The same provider also operates a school care accommodation service situated in Perth.

The service's mission is to make 'positive, meaningful changes in the lives of young people, underpinned by our shared core values of respect, integrity, compassion, honesty and fairness. We nurture individuals and seek to develop a caring and confident community by providing a range of quality learning and care experiences to keep people safe and protected, improve health and wellbeing, raise standards of attainment and achievement and empower young people to be active and responsible citizens.'

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 28 May 2014.

## **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 - N/A**

**Quality of staffing - N/A**

**Quality of management and leadership - Grade 5 - Very 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](http://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 wrote this report following an unannounced inspection by one inspector. Visits to the service took place on:

- Monday 20 June 2016 between 12.20pm and 2.15pm
- Wednesday 22 June 2016 between 10.20am and 3pm
- Thursday 23 June 2016 between 9.45am and 1.05pm.

The manager provided additional evidence on 27 June. We gave feedback to the manager and house/development manager on 4 July 2016.

As part of the inspection, we took account of the annual return and self-assessment that we asked the provider to submit. We sent two questionnaires to the manager to give to young people and received one completed form. We also sent eight questionnaires for distribution to staff and received five completed forms.

During this inspection process, we gathered evidence from various sources.

We spoke with:

- the chief executive (the manager of the service)
- the head of care
- the house/development manager
- four care staff
- one young person
- one social worker.

We looked at:

- aims and objectives
- the service's quality improvement plan
- young people's records including risk assessments, plans and progress reports
- incident records
- child protection records
- medication records and audits
- menus
- disciplinary records
- end of placement reviews
- staff training records
- the child protection and child sexual exploitation policies
- supervision dates
- board meeting records
- senior leadership team records
- external management records.

We also inspected parts of the premises and had lunch with staff and a young person.



## **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](http://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:** Yes - Electronic

## 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.

We received a fully completed self-assessment from the service. This identified what staff and managers thought the service did well and gave examples of planned improvements in some areas.

## Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We received a completed questionnaire from one young person, who was very happy with the quality of care. She made additional comments: 'This is a great place to stay - you are offered a wide range of activities. The staff team are amazing and know what to do when I'm upset or struggling and to be honest if it wasn't for them and this place I don't know where I would be now.' We also spoke briefly to another young person during a visit.

## Taking carers' views into account

We received feedback from a social worker, who was very satisfied with the quality of care and support provided by the service. Staff had been 'helpful, accommodating and approachable'. They communicated well and kept the young person busy during her stay. They also supported the transition to a new placement. She would recommend the service to others.

## 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 3

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

#### Service strengths

We chose to review this statement because this 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 information we gather will help us understand the current situation in Scotland and allow us to identify where improvements in knowledge and skills are needed.

The service performed very well in this area and demonstrated major strengths, maintaining the high standards of care and support we saw at the previous inspection.

- Management of child protection concerns was effective and overall the service's risk assessment and management approach was thorough and kept young people as safe as possible. The service had a child sexual exploitation policy that identified specific risk indicators. All the staff we spoke with were aware that concerns about possible exploitation needed to be recorded and reported as with any incidents of a child protection nature. Some had attended relevant training and demonstrated awareness of the specific risk and vulnerability indicators. Other arrangements for keeping young people protected from abuse and harm also worked well. For example, staff worked collaboratively with the police in the event that young people went missing so that they could be safely returned. Staff managed incidents of challenging behaviour well. Managers also monitored incidents as they occurred so that they could respond promptly to reduce the risk of recurrence. One example of a positive outcome was a reduction in the frequency of self-harm by one young person.
- Young people had access to suitable healthcare, including doctors and dentists. This formed part of a successful approach to supporting them to reach the highest attainable standard of health. Staff also supported young people to make healthy and safe choices, for example with regards to diet, sleep routines and sexual health. They managed young people's medication safely.
- The service provided young people with a very wide range of activities and experiences, making good use of community facilities. These allowed regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise as well as stimulation. This was particularly important given that young people staying at Safe Base did not have access to formal education.

- There was a strong focus on catering the service to meeting young people's needs for beneficial daily routines and predictable responses from staff. Staff managed incidents of challenging behaviour well, seeking to lower arousal and help young people to regain control without the use of physical intervention. They supported continuing contact with family and friends where possible to provide an element of continuity and promote a sense of worth. Relationships between staff and young people were generally positive and allowed trust to be developed over time. We saw a letter from a young person who had stayed at Safe Base and very much appreciated the nurturing support she had received: 'you have all been my life line...staff have helped me to see the brighter side of life'. Reflective practice sessions for staff, facilitated by the service's psychologist, had been introduced. In providing support for staff and contributing to their understanding of young people, these should in turn enable the service to continue to raise standards and achieve positive outcomes.

### Areas for improvement

The areas for improvement we identified were mainly about improving some processes and inputs: we found no indication that these had led to negative outcomes for young people.

- Some staff were not familiar with the service's policy on child sexual exploitation and the associated risk indicators. Some had not yet had training in this area. **(See Recommendation 1, Quality Theme 1.3)**
- A minority of staff had had training in self-harm.
- There was room for improving the risk assessment used by the service to determine to what extent young people could manage their own medication.

## Grade

5 - Very Good

**Number of requirements - 0**

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations - 1**

1. The provider should continue the process of improving its approach to protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation by ensuring that staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills.

**National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services: Standard 3 - Care and Protection.**

## Statement 5

“We respond to service users' care and support needs using person centered values.”

### Service strengths

We chose this statement because we have not evaluated it for some time. We concluded that the service's performance was very good, with major strengths.

- Staff encouraged and supported young people to take an active part in developing their risk assessments and plans and reviewing progress. Young people could if they wished contribute to their daily logs. They had access to independent advocacy if they felt they needed this to ensure their views were heard.
- The focus of each young person's stay at Safe Base was clearly identified. This allowed a realistic and achievable plan to be developed for a short stay. Plans were very person-centred and catered to meeting individual needs, preferences and circumstances. Weekly progress reports to social workers ensured they were kept up to date and contributed to planning for future care arrangements.
- Young people had a range of choices and staff encouraged them to manage their day-to-day lives.
- The service planned further staff training on the National Care Standards later in the year to raise awareness and ensure care and support for young people met national guidance. These are currently being reviewed, with final standards due to be rolled out and implemented from April 2017 and used in inspections thereafter. Further information can be found at [www.newcarestandards.scot](http://www.newcarestandards.scot)

### Areas for improvement

The service may wish to consider revising the weekly progress report to ensure a clearer focus on the placement focus areas or SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

**Grade**

5 - Very Good

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**



## Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Quality theme not assessed

## Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Quality theme not assessed

## Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

### Statement 3

“To encourage good quality care, we promote leadership values throughout the workforce.”

### Service strengths

The 'Strategy for building leadership capacity in Scotland's social services 2013-2015' (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014) says that the workforce needs 'strong leadership skills at all levels and a supportive working environment. Evidence shows that such a workforce is more productive, motivated and responsive to people's needs.' This includes frontline staff, managers and corporate and strategic leaders.

The service performed to a very good standard with major strengths.

- Managers kept the staff teams well-informed about corporate developments and plans. They actively encouraged staff to play a part in service evaluation and improvement. For example, they were involved in developing the self-assessment, and played a key role in reviews of young people's placements and identifying lessons to learn. Staff also had opportunities to express their views and make suggestions at planned supervision and during more informal contact with house managers.
- There was a range of leadership development opportunities in the service. These included taking on responsibility for areas of work, leading shifts, key working, training other staff, taking up promoted posts and developing ideas. There were plans to have a team of 'champions' who would take on lead roles in areas such as sleep promotion and the new therapeutic model that was to be introduced in the near future.

- The house manager role was working well in the service. As well as providing a development opportunity, there were benefits in terms of increasing the service's quality assurance capacity. Overall we felt that there was a strong element of devolved leadership in the houses. This provided staff with appropriate opportunities to use their judgement, make decisions and develop a sense of ownership, though management support was available, including on an on-call basis. Policies and procedures also signposted staff to additional reading to widen their knowledge.
- Other opportunities to gain skills and experience included the professional development award in supervision for senior staff and others, and additional training in debriefing after incidents. These had the potential for contributing to further improvements in the service. One of the project objectives for 2016 was to provide development opportunities for staff to gain wider experience.
- There was also an increasing emphasis on staff being effectively supported in their work in order to be better able to provide young people with high standards of care and positive outcomes. An example of this was regular reflective sessions with the service's consultant psychologist, which staff clearly valued.
- The first leadership forum (including senior managers, house managers and the service's psychology consultant) had just had its first meeting. This was a forum for sharing ideas, updating on business developments and providing time for reflection and support. The objective was to involve a wider group in the development of leadership at Balnacraig. We look forward to seeing this develop.

### Areas for improvement

The SSSC's 'Step into Leadership' programme may be of interest to the service as they work to develop capacity in the staff team.

### 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

We chose to review this statement because of the importance of an effective self-evaluation and quality assurance process in the achievement of positive outcomes and experiences for young people. We concluded that the service achieved a very good standard with major strengths. These strengths are reflected in the similar performance in the quality of care and support.

- The service had developed an improvement plan. This demonstrated a clear understanding of what they did well and where they needed to develop and was regularly reviewed as part of the process of on-going evaluation by staff and managers. This included for example, reviews of all young people's placements after their stay. The revised version also contained specific timescales. The service had continued to make progress in achieving the targets set. There were plans to support the quality assurance system by introducing an annual calendar of tasks and activities later in the summer.
- Staff had contributed to the development of the service's self-assessment submitted before this inspection, which provided additional information about the service's performance.
- All staff had had regular supervision and some had had an annual employee review and development session.
- The service made use of a range of other quality assurance methods including file and medication audits.
- House managers monitored incidents as they occurred and ensured that any necessary changes to practice or plans for supporting young people were implemented.
- Managers addressed concerns about staff performance and conduct. There had been learning about the need to act as promptly as possible when concerns came to light.

- Senior managers met regularly to ensure that the service's strategic objectives were met.
- The board of governors maintained regular contact with the manager and provided her with very good support. They had played an important role in establishing strategic priorities for the service, contributing to the development of its key values and exercising their corporate parenting responsibilities. They maintained oversight of inspection reports and the induction programme for new members was also impressive. There had been an undertaking to ensure that visits by board members to the service were recorded more consistently.

### Areas for improvement

A small number of incidents should have been subject to formal notification to the Care Inspectorate in accordance with the guidance we have issued. We accepted these were oversights given the service's usual practice.

### Grade

5 - Very 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

We have not upheld any complaints 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

Date	Type	Gradings
12 May 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment
		5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good

		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good



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