

## Safe Base @ Balnacraig Care Home Service

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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 4 May 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Balnacraig School

**Service provider number:**  
SP2010011127

**Care service number:**  
CS2013321869

## About the service

Safe Base @ Balnacraig is a care home service for one young person 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.

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 in Perth and Kinross.

The accommodation is a single-storey cottage with one en-suite bedroom and additional staff accommodation. It has a communal lounge, dining room and kitchen as well as extensive grounds and a garden.

The service's aims and objectives include making positive, meaningful changes in the lives of young people, nurturing individuals, keeping young people safe and protected and improving health and wellbeing.

The service has been registered since May 2014.

## What people told us

We spoke with one young person, who, whilst she had not been happy about moving to Safe Base, told us she thought it was 'all right'. All staff treated her well, though she had some favourites. She liked the food and kept busy doing lots of activities.

## Self assessment

We did not ask providers to submit a new self-assessment this year.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

## What the service does well

The service's performance in both quality themes was very good and demonstrated major strengths.

Staff quickly formed positive, trusting relationships with young people. This was particularly important given the very short length of their stay and the difficult circumstances in which they arrived. Keeping young people safe was a high priority for the team and they did this very effectively. This required robust collation of information and risk management as well as working in partnership with other professionals. Plenty of regular fresh air and exercise, as well as excellent use of community facilities were part and parcel of every young person's stay. With staff support, many young people had been able to improve routines such as sleep and diet and to try out new experiences. The very good connections staff made with them ensured they were nurtured, listened to, and able to exercise choice on a day-to-day basis. Their privacy was also respected

Whilst there had been no new staff appointments, examination of relevant records for the provider's other service indicated that they had robust recruitment systems, helping to safeguard young people by ensuring only suitable staff were appointed. They were diligent in obtaining and where necessary clarifying references.

There was a systematic learning and development programme linked to the service's strategic aims. Training was relevant and based on best practice. It had had a positive impact on staff practice. Moving forward, this year's programme included modules based on the Scottish Social Services Council's 'Step into Leadership' initiative. This reflected the provider's commitment to leadership development, which included promoted posts, management training and staff involvement in specific initiatives.

Whilst the staff team was relatively new (though not inexperienced), they were developing effective ways of working under the leadership of the responsible manager. They had had fairly regular, good quality supervision. Expectations of staff performance and conduct had been raised to good effect. We found staff were enthusiastic and committed to creating positive experiences for young people in crisis.

## What the service could do better

Our suggestions were largely about improving some processes and inputs as outcomes were very good.

Staff should ensure that door alarms are included in the risk assessment for those young people for whom they are used, given their potential for restriction of movement.

The possibility of young people managing all or some aspects of their medication should always be considered: the service's risk assessment will need to be reviewed to reflect this.

We recommended that the provider develop aims and objectives specific to Safe Base in addition to the corporate ones already in place.

A small number of child protection concerns had not been notified to the Care Inspectorate in line with guidance.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
4 Jul 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
12 May 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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