

Safe Base @ Balnacraig Care Home Service

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:

Balnacraig School

Service provider number:

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About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

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

Safe Base @ Balnacraig is a care home service for one young person aged between nine and 17 years. The maximum length of stay is 90 consecutive days. On occasion, young people will remain longer by agreement with the Care Inspectorate.

The service provides short-term placements for young people experiencing circumstances such as family crises, placement breakdown 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.

Safe Base @ Balnacraig 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.

What people told us

"Staff have helped me express my feelings and they listen to me".

We spent an afternoon in the service and were delighted to spend all of this with one young person and the staff. We were given a tour of the cottage as well as the gardens. It was clear that the young person had been able to influence the environment and it felt like their home.

We heard during our discussions that the young person felt very safe and particularly well looked after. We were told that they did lots of activities and the staff team had made a significant effort to listen and to ensure they had fun.

The house was decorated with the young person's artwork and the garden was utilised as an area for reflection and mindfulness. We were told that the young person appreciated this space. The young person told us the food was good and that they enjoyed cooking with staff.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	not assessed

How good is our staffing?	not assessed
How good is our setting?	not assessed
How well is our care and support planned?	6 - Excellent

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?

6 - Excellent

From our inspection findings, we concluded that Safe Base @ Balnacraig was operating at a level of excellence across this theme. We were incredibly impressed by the cohesion of the staff team and consistently effective model of care being provided to the young person.

We reviewed the service's child protection policies, processes and procedures and found that they effectively kept the young person safe from harm, abuse and exploitation. The risk assessments were regularly reviewed and analysed by the manager and staff ensuring this was an ongoing activity.

Despite the short-term nature of the safe base placement, the staff had quickly developed meaningful and secure relationships with the young person. Certain staff were brought in at key times during the day to support trigger points. We found a consistent approach to care and support that ensured the young person knew exactly what was happening and who would be with them. This helped the young person feel emotionally contained and able to emotionally connect with staff.

The young person was active daily and benefitted from a staff team who were creative and full of energy. We were hugely impressed by the flexibility of staff to be led by the young person's interests and this resulted in a happy and fun environment.

The young person was receiving external advocacy, and this was encouraged by the staff and the manager. The manager took responsibility for liaising directly with families and, where possible, promoted a model of positive parenting. As well as contact with family, there was a focus on ensuring friendships were maintained despite the young person living away from home. School attendance was prioritised, and the manager had advocated on behalf of the young person to find an appropriate venue.

Safe Base @ Balnacraig utilises a trauma informed therapeutic model of care. We found the staff had a clear understanding about the importance of listening to young people and an insight into how to manage individual trauma. Attachment theory had underpinned service development days and the overarching model of practice.

Achievement was encouraged and celebrated, as were key dates in the young person's life. When issues arose, the staff team were sensitive and proactive in trying to resolve these without creating further distress. There were regular team meetings which ensured staff had the opportunity to plan the care and support with the oversight of the manager.

Leading a healthy lifestyle was a core foundation of the care and support and a daily activity that the young person was helped to lead on. Every effort was made to ensure sleep routines were embedded and the young person was comfortable and relaxed in the house and with staff.

How good is our leadership?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our staff team?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our setting?

This key question was not assessed.

How well is our care and support planned?

6 - Excellent

We were immensely impressed with the desire to involve the young person in their care and support and to create a nurturing environment. As a result, the outcomes for the young person were an example of best practice.

Safe Base @ Balnacraig have developed excellent systems and processes for assessing, reviewing and analysing young people's progress. The care plan was consistently completed to a high standard and we were impressed by the tracking of monthly goals which were created in conjunction with the young person. Staff appeared committed to the process which resulted in key time discussions linking with the identified goals. It was clear that the young person had achieved significant outcomes since arriving in the service.

We found that a huge emphasis was placed on understanding a young person before any placement was agreed. This proactive approach to transition work ensured that the staff and manager were able to plan care and support prior to the young person's arrival. The service seeks as much information as possible so that intended outcomes can be considered at the earliest opportunity. We spoke with senior managers from placing local authorities and were told about the excellent communication that took place and that they were hugely impressed with the outcomes for their young people.

We found that staff quickly adjusted their practice to build a relationship with the young person and found common interests which created comfort and fun. The staff fully understood the need to build trust and acted quickly to do this. We saw that the young person was given lots of space to think about how they wanted to be supported using a tool called 'you talk, we listen'. Using this tool, the staff and manager developed a strong understanding of the young person's communication style, both verbal and nonverbal and utilised creative strategies to build on this.

It was our evaluation that the young person was comprehensively involved in planning their care. This occurred on a daily basis but also through forward planning discussions at team meetings. We were heartened by the

efforts of all the staff to engage with the young person and ensure they had an excellent quality of life whilst living at Safe Base.

We inspected this service at the beginning of the summer holidays. We were really impressed by the forward planning and thought put into creating fun activities. Furthermore, the plans were focused on social engagement and it was incredibly pleasing to see evidence of attendance at local groups and the young person having fun whilst building positive relationships with peers.

Balnacraig has very good structures in place to ensure best practice is shared across its environments. We found that the organisation was committed to service development based on the success of Safe Base@ Balnacraig.

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 wellbeing?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	6 - Excellent
1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life	6 - Excellent
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	6 - Excellent
How well is our care and support planned?	6 - Excellent
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	6 - Excellent

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