

## North Ayrshire Families Service Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 25 September 2017

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003405

**Care service number:**  
CS2004067699

## About the service

North Ayrshire Families Service provides support to families and individuals who are either homeless or threatened by homelessness. Referrals generally are made by the local authority or independent housing providers, and service users can be located anywhere in the North Ayrshire area. At the time of inspection, the service was supporting a total of 119 families or individuals. A weekly advice clinic, available both to service users and members of the public, is also provided by them.

The service is operated by Barnardo's and based in ample accommodation in Kilwinning town centre. They were previously registered with the Care Commission before transferring their registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

## What people told us

We spoke with five service users during inspection, who all spoke very positively about the service, with many emphasising the positive relationships they had with project workers. One person, who had just moved into his own tenancy, advised he felt this may not have happened if it hadn't been for the support he had received from the service. Comments included:

"It's the best charity".

"It's been like a lifeline to me".

"It's been brilliant".

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment prior to the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork in order to assess how they monitored service provision.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## What the service does well

We found that the service had a high commitment to relationship based practice, and this was viewed as key to helping service users make progress. Observations of staff with service users indicated they interacted in a warm and respectful manner.

A particular strength of the service was its groupwork programmes. These covered areas, such as tenancy support, "seasons for growth", which supported young people with issues of grief and loss, and "incredible years", which was aimed at developing positive relationships and attachments between parents and young children. All these programmes were evaluated, and feedback from service users was extremely positive.

Care plans were linked to the wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) identified in the Scottish Government policy Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). This was the case for families with children, but also for individuals without children, which in our opinion made sense, as the wellbeing indicators could equally be relevant for adults as they could for children. We felt this led to a consistent approach for all service users.

The service used an "outcome star" with service users, to assist them to chart their progress and identify areas they were doing well in but also areas where they required further support. They had also adapted this approach for children, and there were good examples of young people being assisted to review their progress.

A commitment to ensure service users were involved in contributing to and developing the service was a particular strength. An example of this was supporting service users to become volunteers or peer mentors, with the aim of both enhancing their confidence but also offering peer support to other service users. A comprehensive training programme was in place for all prospective volunteers.

The service had organised a number of positive social activities and events. These included numerous day trips together with parties at Halloween and Christmas. In addition, the service had access to a caravan at a nearby holiday park, which they used to provide holidays for families in need, which gave children the opportunity to have a holiday when otherwise this might not have happened.

We found some examples of positive outcomes for service users; for instance, many service users had progressed to sustain their own tenancy with the support of the service.

We found that there was a supportive culture within the team, with regular meetings occurring, which were recorded with agreed action points. There was also a commitment to team development, with fairly frequent team development sessions taking place.

Supervision of staff occurred regularly, on average every six to eight weeks, and we were impressed with the high quality of some of the supervision records. All staff had an annual appraisal in place, which detailed areas of progress but also any required future development.

All staff advised they felt supported very well by the management of the service, who they said were very approachable.

## What the service could do better

At the last inspection, the following recommendations were made:

1. The service should record evidential statements to support the scoring used to inform outcome statements.

We found that this recommendation had not been met. While in some cases, there was evidence of discussion and explanation behind outcome assessments, this was not universal and was not present in some of the cases we reviewed. We advised the manager of the need to ensure outcomes assessments are completed to a good standard for all service users.

2. Staff should ensure that a more robust recording is in place regarding children and the action to be taken in the event of a child being unseen or making a lack of progress. This is specifically when the family has been referred to be supported with childcare issues.

We also found that this recommendation had not been met. While workers were now recording, where appropriate, if a child had been seen, this had not in itself helped to protect children. Indeed, we noted some occasions where childcare concerns had not been addressed appropriately or passed to the relevant statutory agency. We further noted that, in some cases, risk assessments were poor and did not include information which the service was aware of.

(Refer to recommendation 1).

3. Case files audits should be carried out by the manager.

We found this recommendation had not been met. In cases sampled, we only found one instance where files had been audited.

(Refer to recommendation 2).

We noted that in some cases referral information received by the service was poor. On occasion, the focus of work was not identified, which at times led to support plans being vague. We advised the service that it may be useful to update their referral form, to prompt referrers to give more comprehensive information about the needs of prospective service users.

We observed that, sometimes, caravan holidays for families with school age children were organized during school term time. We felt this could potentially have an adverse effect on children's social and educational development, particularly in cases where school attendance had been an issue. We gave the service advice about trying to ensure holidays for school age children should, if at all possible, be organized during school holiday times.

While the service had a development plan in place, this had last been completed for the year 2015/16. We advised the service that this should be updated.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 2

1. The service should ensure all staff receive appropriate training and support to carry out thorough risk assessments on service users incorporating all relevant information. If the service has any concerns about the welfare of an individual, statutory agencies should be informed, in line with the provider's policies on child protection and adult support and protection.

National Care Standards for Housing Support Services - Standard 3: Management and staffing arrangements.

2. The manager of the service should carry out regular audits of all care plans, including risk assessments, outcome assessments and case recordings, for all service users.

National Care Standards for Housing Support Services – Standard 3: Management and staffing arrangements.

## 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	
15 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	4 – Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	5 – Very good
20 Nov 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	5 – Very good
5 Nov 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	5 – Very good
14 Dec 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
17 Feb 2009	Announced	Care and support	5 – Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 – Very good
		Management and leadership	4 – Good

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