

## Safe Base @ Balnacraig Care Home Service

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Telephone: 01796 472378

**Type of inspection:**

Unannounced

**Completed on:**

10 May 2018

**Service provided by:**

Balnacraig School

**Service provider number:**

SP2010011127

**Service no:**

CS2013321869

## About the service

Safe Base @ Balnacraig is a care home service for one young person aged between nine and seventeen years. The service has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since May 2014.

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.

## What people told us

We did not receive any completed care standard questionnaires from young people prior to the inspection.

One young person was staying in the service at the time of inspection. They respectfully declined to be involved in the inspection process.

## Self assessment

We did not ask the manager to submit a self-assessment this year. Instead we looked at the service development plan for evidence of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

## What the service does well

The service's performance in relation to the quality themes Care and Support and Management and Leadership was very good and demonstrated major strengths.

We saw very good evidence of regular team and management meetings taking place. Changes to the meeting structure had improved communication at all levels and we heard that access to information and opportunities for discussion and reflection had improved.

A very good improvement plan which was clear, informative and realistic was in place. A strategic review of the service showed that managers had good insight into the current capacity of the service, the changing needs of young people being referred and the future service developments required to continue to meet anticipated needs.

The service has continued to develop relationships with local authorities and has supported young people experiencing crisis to stabilise the behaviours and concerns which have led to the need for emergency admission.

Needs and age range of young people requiring support have varied greatly since the last inspection. Some young people present with difficulties relating to their mental health and wellbeing. Many young people arrive on an emergency basis following a placement breakdown. Staff have responded to meeting those needs through a combination of experience, training and shared reflection on 'what works'. There has been good liaison with external agencies including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Who Cares Scotland.

The team have worked hard to develop a therapeutic model of support which has benefited from continuous review and evaluation following each young person's stay. We could see from care plans and risk assessments that care is highly individualised and boundary setting is based around the individuals needs and risks. Aims identified within plans, were created in collaboration with the young person and were focused on stabilising the young person, reducing individual risk-taking behaviours and identifying what future supports the young person may need.

There was evidence of positive outcomes for young people whose care plans we looked at. Very good care planning for and with young people was evident since the last inspection. Outcomes since last inspection included reduced misuse of substances, reduction of absconding and reduced risk of exposure to sexual exploitation. Relationships with staff, consistency of approach and security of environment were attributed as factors which had supported young people to feel safe.

At the time of inspection, the young person on placement was extremely independent and was engaging less with staff than previous young people had. It was difficult to consider the impact of the limited support this young person had required/received from staff although it was clear that positive progress had been made and risk taking behaviours had reduced significantly whilst staying at Safe Base.

Young people receiving care at Safe Base are often not in education, training or employment due to the complex issues leading up to placement. We could see that the team work hard to bring structure into the young person's life and find meaningful activity to engage in. This has included supporting young people with daily routines including better sleep patterns, regular meal times, access to a range of activities and increasing general life skills. We heard plans of exploring vocational learning opportunities which would give accreditation to the programme of support currently in place and thought this would be a very good progression for the service.

## What the service could do better

The service had recently altered their staffing ratio for Safe Base, details of which they had proposed in a variation request to the Care Inspectorate which had not been concluded at the time of the inspection. Although we could see that the service had considered the risk assessment of the young person on placement, we have reminded the service that significant operational changes should not be implemented without Care Inspectorate agreement and that the staffing schedule referred to in the current certificate of registration should be adhered to at all times (See Recommendation 1).

The provider has recently reviewed its senior staffing structure and was recruiting for additional care managers across the range of services at the time of inspection. We felt that this was a positive plan for development as it would allow the Safe Base manager to focus solely on developing the Safe Base service, with the aim of promoting greater support and consistency for young people and staff. We look forward to seeing how this develops at next inspection.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. In order to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are in place at all times, minimum staffing levels should be consistent with the staffing schedule referred to in the current certificate of registration.

**This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard 3.15 which states "My needs are met by the right number of people".**

## 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 May 2017	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
4 Jul 2016	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>
12 May 2015	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>

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