

## Supported Carers Service Adult Placement Service

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**Type of inspection:**

Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**

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**Service provided by:**

South Lanarkshire Council

**Service provider number:**

SP2003003481

**Service no:**

CS2007154895

## About the service

South Lanarkshire Council's Supported Carers Service is registered as an adult placement service. Placements in a supported carer's home are for young people who have been living in a residential children's service, with foster carers or other social work resource. They are usually long-term but can also be short-term when agreed.

The service's objective is for young people to become as independent as possible by the time they move on. The focus is on supporting them to achieve this by the age of 21, as this is currently when their after-care support ends.

Getting It Right for South Lanarkshire's Children and Families Vision:

'Children and Young people and their families will be safeguarded and supported to reach their potential and thrive within their communities'

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

## What people told us

At the time of the Inspection the service were supporting five carers, who were looking after six young people.

We carried out two home visits, met with three carers and three young people during these visits. We spoke with one support carer by phone. The service also provided us with feedback that they had collated from carers, young people, birth family members and placing social workers.

Overall the feedback during this Inspection from young people and carers was extremely positive, with all carers speaking highly about the support they received from their link worker and the manager of the service.

Some carers advised us that they would prefer support groups and training to be more specific to the needs of the young people in their care. There was also concern from some carers about delays in securing young people's futures through the pathway planning process. This will be discussed further within the body of the report.

We made telephone contact with three of the young people's social workers to advise them of our findings and obtain their views during the Inspection. However only one worker returned our call prior to the report being submitted. Therefore, we have asked the team leader of the supported carers service to take forward any concerns we had identified for young people during the Inspection on our behalf.

Supported Carers Commented:

'I had a lot of information about the young person prior to being placed, I knew a lot about the family history and that helped us a lot'

'My link worker is great, she is very knowledgeable and if not available I can contact any of the other workers even the manager'

'It is not always easy to contact the young people's workers and that can be really frustrating, I have no occupancy agreement for my young person'

'We get plenty opportunities to feedback our opinions, through supervision and we get listened to by our workers'

Young People commented:

'I'm going to stay here until I have a plan for my future'

'I'll stay here for the moment, I like it'

'My carer is very kind and lovely, I feel safe here'

'I would talk to my carer if I had any problems'

'I am happy here, and I've talked to Lynn (carers supervising social worker) a few times she always says hello'

As the findings of this inspection are based on a sample of carers and young people, Inspectors cannot assure the quality of experience for every single child receiving a service.

## Self assessment

We did not request a self-assessment for this inspection year, however, the manager provided relevant documentation in readiness for the inspection.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	5 - Very Good

## What the service does well

We found that young people continued to experience very good outcomes during this inspection, and we were satisfied that they were benefiting in particular from the establishment of nurturing and lasting relationships with their support carers. Young people informed us that they felt fully integrated into their carers families, and valued this additional level of support. These relationships provided a sense of stability, which in turn helped to promote young people's emotional and physical wellbeing. It was significant that a number of young people who had moved onto independent living remained in close contact with their carers and clearly regarded themselves as still being part of the supported carers family.

In relation to more practical outcomes, we heard the following from carers and young people -

Young people obtaining and sustaining full time employment, and also being supported to join youth employability programmes.

Young people achieving academically through higher education, and being supported in the development of their interests leading to achievements. An example of this would be the highest level of Duke of Edinburgh award.

Some young people had learned to drive, or use local transport facilities and were travelling independently to and from work, and this had resulted in an overall increase in confidence. In some cases young people had been strongly supported through immigration processes to remain in this country which was clearly in their best interests.

A key element to obtaining good outcomes for young people, relates to matching young people with appropriate carers as well as alongside other young people already in placement. We found this was an area of strength in the cases we examined during the Inspection, and this feature provided stability for young people. It was very encouraging to hear carers speak with absolute passion about the progress made by young people, and carers acted as strong and positive advocates for them.

A locality worker commented:

'There has been very good matching between the carers and young person, the staff team take every detail into consideration, this had led to a very good outcome with the placement is meeting all the young persons needs' .

Young people's achievements were also celebrated within the services' newsletter which was informative and engaging, and also provided regular updates such as carer training, changes to staffing and recruitment activity. We discussed with the team leader ways in which young people could become involved in the formation of this newsletter, and these suggestions will be considered within the services overall development plan.

It was evident that the relationship that carers had with the staff supporting them was of a very good quality. The frequency and responsiveness of this support was valued by carers who felt that the timing of these visits were proportionate to their needs. In contrast to this, we did not hear the same consistent message about positive work carried out by young people's social workers from all carers. There were particular concerns regarding difficulties trying to contact social workers and this impacted on the availability and quality of that support. We discussed this with managers, who advised us that they are now taking steps to strengthen the recording and monitoring around the frequency of visits to young people, and the service are also introducing joint visits alongside link workers. We will look at this area during the next service Inspection.

Despite the above difficulties, carers were preparing young people very well for their eventual move to adult life and living independently. They supported young people to take appropriate risks and helped them develop independence skills. The service strongly supports young people to remain living with their carers into adulthood, where appropriate and agreed by the authority.

We examined the services adult protection policy and guidance, and their child and adult protection multi agency event presented to carers. We were satisfied with the procedures in place to ensure young people were protected, however the supported carers service requires more specific bespoke training, and the uptake was limited. However despite this, in discussion with carers they demonstrated a sound understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities surrounding young people, and applied this information to their practice.

Morale within the staff team was reported as being very good, link workers appreciated on-going positive peer and managerial support, and we observed this taking place during our Inspection. The content of supervision records and annual appraisals for staff were appropriate, reflective and also included a welfare element to ensure their wellbeing. Staff informed us that they felt valued and that their views were listed to at development days and during team meetings. This was also evident in minutes of meeting we examined.

Since the last Inspection, there had been unexpected long term absence within the management team and this had impacted on the capacity for some identified service developments to be implemented.

This situation has now been resolved and the team leader, supervising social workers and manager of the service are very well placed to make the necessary improvements. Staff of the service presented to us as being confident and ambitious for the young people, and in addition they were motivated to improve outcomes and support lifelong chances.

## What the service could do better

The local authority has a duty to develop and implement sustainable pathway plans in collaboration with young people and any other key individuals. Pathway planning, and the review of these plans for young people was not evident in all of the cases we examined. This needs to be addressed as a matter of priority as this is likely to lead to lack of clarity around plans for young people moving to independent living and for identifying any additional support required. The carers support service will also need to ensure a robust auditing process is in place to highlight any areas of weakness within the planning process, and bring these to the attention of senior managers.

### This will form Recommendation 1.

Risk assessments for young people were not routinely taken forward or reviewed when vulnerabilities had been identified that would increase risk. We discussed this with the team manager and action was taken to address this difficulty prior to the Inspection ending. We will look at this area during the next service Inspection.

The Improvement and Development plan for the supported carers service is currently being reviewed and updated. Managers informed us that this will be completed in full collaboration with carers and young people.

The following should be incorporated within the improvement plan.

The development of the supported carers training programme and support group including mandatory adult protection training.

The auditing of case files to ensure care planning processes are being met within timescales.

Information being provided for young people being placed in supported care at point of admission should be developed alongside a review of carer profiles.

A recruitment campaign for supported carers and how to expand/raise the profile of the service.

We have asked the service to submit their updated aims and objectives and development plan to the Care Inspectorate on completion.

We were confident that any areas for development or improvement identified during this Inspection had been taken seriously, and will be included within their overall service action plan. We look forward to assessing the outcomes of these developments during next service Inspection.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. South Lanarkshire Council should ensure that pathway planning for young people is carried out within set timescales and regularly reviewed. They must seek out and take account of the views and wishes of the young person in assessing their needs in preparing a plan that comes out of the assessment.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I am fully involved in assessing my emotional, psychological, social and physical needs at an early stage, regularly and when my needs change" (HSCS 1.12).

## 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).

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
21 Feb 2018	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 5 - Very good
1 Nov 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
20 Jan 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
3 Jan 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
8 Jan 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
4 Feb 2011	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
22 Mar 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
31 Mar 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing
		4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	4 - Good



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