Care Visions - Cowdenlaws Farm
Care Home Service

Standing Stane Road
Dysart
Kirkcaldy
KY1 2YT

Telephone: 01592 654717

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Completed on: 2 May 2019

Service provided by: Care Visions Group Limited
Service provider number: SP2003002569

Service no: CS2009230689
About the service

Cowdenlaws Farm is a care home service for up to three children and young people aged between eight and 18. It is situated in a semi-rural location about three miles from the centre of Kirkcaldy in Fife. The house is a traditional, detached farmhouse with a garden. Each young person has their own bedroom, two of which have en suites. They also have use of a living room, conservatory, dining kitchen, and utility room.

The provider is Care Visions Group Limited, a private limited company operating a total of 30 care home services throughout Scotland. Care Visions has adopted the Sanctuary model of care, which uses the SELF (safety, emotions, loss and future) framework. This has seven commitments, which are the organisation’s core values: non-violence, emotional intelligence, social learning, social responsibility, democracy, open communication, and growth and change.

The service’s aims and objectives include providing:

• high levels of commitment to young people
• positive and enjoyable life experiences
• improved life options
• a child-centred, caring and professional service
• stable, consistent and positive adult role models.

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

Additional note:

The Care Inspectorate is working to change how we inspect regulated services. We have been developing a new framework for inspection in consultation with providers and young people experiencing care. The new framework is a ‘quality indicators’ framework which identifies key outcomes for services and those inputs that are essential to bring about good outcomes. The framework aims to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people who use services and how their rights are promoted and protected.

For this inspection we have used the draft framework for care homes for children and young people and school care accommodation (special residential schools). The illustrations within this framework are tailored to accurately describe the experiences and outcomes we expect to see for children and young people in these settings.
What people told us

We spoke with all of the young people on an individual basis and shared a lunchtime and evening meal with two of them. We also received feedback from one young person in the form of a questionnaire. The young people had their own unique perspective on their experiences at Cowdenlaws, many of which had been positive, though there had been more difficult times. Overall they thought quite highly of staff, describing positive relationships. Whilst one young person did not feel listened to and that the rules weren’t fair, we felt this probably reflected individual circumstances rather than any fault on staff’s part. Nevertheless he did not feel it was a ‘bad place’. Some comments about an enduring relationship with a staff member and the care, support and encouragement they had provided were particularly heart-warming. Two referred to staff changes as being difficult for them. Getting a hug from staff was mentioned as a positive thing. All the young people told us they had not always felt safe or happy recently, during periods of tension and conflict. They could all describe being able to exercise a range of choices in their day-to-day lives.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well do we support children and young people’s wellbeing?</td>
<td>4 - Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good is our leadership?</td>
<td>not assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good is our staffing?</td>
<td>not assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good is our setting?</td>
<td>not assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well is our care and support planned?</td>
<td>4 - Good</td>
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</table>

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? 4 - Good

Young people’s relationships with staff at Cowdenlaws were characterised overall by affection and good humour and clearly had a high priority. The fact that non-core staff enjoyed working there was testament to this. Some relationships had endured over a longer period and had provided a strong source of continuity and support during difficult times. However staff had also formed positive relationships with young people who had not been there long. They respected young people’s privacy and encouraged them to be considerate. We felt though that this could extend to promoting a culture of more respectful language. A response to a complaint indicated a commitment to staff showing sensitivity, protecting confidentiality and behaving professionally. Young people had a variety of ways of voicing their wishes and opinions, for example during house meetings and informally with staff, and many were acted on. The service had arranged independent advocacy for young people when their views were at odds with the local authority’s plans.
Young people exercised lots of choice in their day-to-day lives. This was a busy household and they spent time with friends and family and took part in individual interests. Staff also organised enjoyable group activities which contributed to strengthening relationships, and birthday parties served to remind young people that they were worth remembering and celebrating. Most felt well-occupied and all were physically active and spent time outdoors. It was disappointing to hear however that staffing issues might not allow them to take young people on holiday this year. All young people had work or school placements and whilst attendance varied, staff provided support and encouragement. They had liaised with education authorities to try to ensure young people’s educational needs were recognised and met. All young people were developing essential practical skills at an appropriate pace, though the manager had asked that instead of using the expression ‘independent living’, staff consider something with less potential for causing anxiety. The service had recently registered with ASDAN in order to help young people to develop additional learning, work and life skills (as well as formal recognition and qualifications). We look forward to seeing the impact of this at future inspections. We were satisfied that the service had effective child protection arrangements in place. However, recent tensions and conflicts, including damage to the house, had made all young people feel unsettled and at times unsafe, and caused disruption to sleep. Staff were working hard to minimise the impact of these incidents and should continue to ensure a consistent approach.

Whilst there were stable and secure relationships, high staff turnover and shortages disrupted overall continuity and had led to feelings of loss. The provider had identified this and begun to implement action to address the challenges. Most young people were developing greater self-regulation and insight into their behaviour, with a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour for some. A nurturing approach had clearly contributed to a young person’s improving self-esteem and confidence and a sense of hope in what life had to offer. All young people were in good physical health, supported by regular primary care check ups and treatment, as well as access to specialist provision. Staff also encouraged young people to stop smoking. They managed medication safely though should be clearer about the extent to which they are able to take charge of their own medication. There was a proactive approach to young people keeping pets, which should now be supported with improved risk assessment and monitoring. Young people seemed to enjoy their food, and were encouraged to widen their tastes. They were heavily involved in menu planning, shopping and cooking. Mealtimes were lively and social occasions.

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?  4 - Good

The service achieved a good standard in this quality indicator, demonstrating important strengths which, taken together, outweighed areas for improvement. These had a positive impact on young people.

Planning documents used by the service had been developed to reflect national guidance and good practice. They adopted a ‘SMART’ format, with a focus on identifying achievable, positive outcomes and experiences for young people. On the whole they provided an easily understandable basis for moving forward with agreed actions. There was however scope for improving the quality of assessment summaries, which were inconsistent. Some did not provide a detailed enough picture of all young people’s needs, strengths and developmental level in each of the SHANARRI wellbeing areas. If these are developed further, there is potential for improving the overall planning process and evaluation of progress made by young people. In one or two instances, plans did not contain key information in areas we felt were important for the individual young person’s care and support, though we understood the desire to keep them realistic and achievable. Importantly, staff had access to detailed chronological information about young people’s previous experiences to aid a fuller understanding of their needs.

The extent to which young people had taken an active part in the development of their plans (unless they had explicitly stated they did not wish to do so) was less evident. This also applied to the involvement of others such as social workers and education staff for example. The manager had identified the need for most of these improvements and had a plan in place, so we will not include an area for improvement in this report.

Daily logs, now addressed directly to the young person, were friendly and informal and showed a good understanding of young people’s individuality. Overall, record-keeping was of a good standard. We suggested that where there is a need to make lengthier records of discussions, assessment and decision-making by staff during their meetings, these should form part of the young person’s records rather than the staff meeting records. This is important partly to protect confidentiality and allow tracking of progress, but also to ensure full information is available should young people wish to access their records at any stage now or in the future.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well do we support children and young people’s wellbeing?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Children and young people’s health benefits from their care and support they experience</td>
<td>4 - Good</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well is our care and support planned?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people’s needs and wishes</td>
<td>4 - Good</td>
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