Care service inspection report
Validation inspection

Wheatlands
Care Home Service

Wheatlands House
Lee Brae
Galashiels

Inspection report for Wheatlands
Inspection completed on 10 June 2016
Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren’t good enough.

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1 About the service we inspected

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

This service transferred registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Wheatlands is registered as a care home for children and young people. It can care for a maximum of five young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years. It is run by Scottish Borders Council, providing residential care for young people who are assessed as requiring medium to long term care. It is the Council’s only children’s home in the Scottish Borders.

Wheatlands is situated in Galashiels, on a main bus route, not very far from the town centre. It is a detached Victorian building with public areas and a staff office on the ground floor, and bedrooms and bathrooms upstairs. Young people have access to a comfortable lounge, a games room, a dining kitchen and outdoor space.

Its mission statement is:
"Wheatlands will provide high quality childcare for all young people accommodated here. We aim to do this by providing a safe, caring, supportive environment which enables individuals to progress towards and reach their full potential”.

2 What we did during the inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection that took place on 8 June 2016 between 10.00am and 6.00pm. We gave feedback to the manager by telephone on 10 June 2016.

This inspection was a validation inspection where we looked at evidence and validated the findings of the last inspection.

As requested by us, the provider of the service sent us an annual return. They also sent us a completed self assessment.

During this inspection we asked the service to show us evidence to support
their self assessment. We looked at records:
- care plans and young people’s files
- meeting minutes
- incident records
- audit processes
- a variety of policies and procedures.

We looked at the premises of the home.

Before the inspection we sent the service five Care Standard Questionnaires to be given to the young people who use the service. We received three completed questionnaires. We spoke with three young people during the inspection and met one more.

We emailed five placing social workers to ask for their views. We did not get a response from any of the social workers.

During the inspection we had discussion with an assistant unit manager and four residential care workers.

We took all of the above evidence into consideration when writing this report. We also took into account the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and associated Statutory Instruments, the National Care Standards for care homes for children and young people, and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.

3 Conclusion
Wheatlands provides a warm, nurturing environment where young people are valued and respected. The staff are committed to the long term care of the young people and were keen to support them to realise their potential.

4 Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection
We found that there were excellent outcomes for the young people staying at Wheatlands and validated the excellent grade awarded at the last inspection.

The majority of the young people staying at Wheatlands had been there for some
time and were very settled there. The young people we spoke with told us they considered Wheatlands their long term home and said they liked staying there and that they would stay there as long as they possibly could.

Young people told us that they felt staff listened to them and took their views seriously. We saw that young people’s ideas and opinions were recorded in a participation book. Responses from staff and managers were also recorded so that young people could see what action was being taken as a result of their views. We saw a number of examples where changes had been made as a result of young people’s views. These examples included, updates to the house information booklet and the purchase of ‘Netflix’. Young people told us that they wanted Wi Fi within the home and the manager was actively pursuing this with Borders Council.

Staff used open discussion to talk about difference and diversity and support young people to acknowledge and respect differing opinions. We saw staff actively helping young people to manage relationships and resolve conflict.

We saw that each young person had a placement plan which clearly identified their individual needs and aspirations. The plans gave guidance about how staff should work with the young people to achieve their goals. As a result young people received consistent messages and were clear about expectations.

Each young person had a keyworker who worked with them and, where appropriate, their families. The keyworker met regularly with their young person to help them address issues and plan their lives. They also provided a link with other professionals such as social workers. The keyworker system meant that each individual young person had someone to help them explore their needs, seek support to meet those needs and take control of their lives.

In discussion we found that the staff were ambitious for the young people. They worked hard to motivate young people to achieve in school, training and employment. They ensured that young people had the necessary clothing and equipment they needed to gain the best from their experiences.

All aspects of young people’s health care needs were addressed. Young people were registered with appropriate healthcare professionals and staff actively encouraged them to lead healthy lives. Advice and support in managing unsafe behaviour and addiction was readily available both from the Wheatlands staff and from external agencies such as Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). We heard that many of the
staff had been successful in giving up smoking and used their experiences to help young people.

Young people were encouraged to lead healthy and active lifestyles. Many of the young people actively participated in a chosen sport and were achieving to a high standard. Staff participated alongside young people offering praise and encouragement. A recent development had been the introduction of a house football team. Staff and young people told us they enjoyed training together and playing matches in a local league.

The very welcoming atmosphere in the home meant that young people were happy to bring their friends to visit. In addition young people who had moved on often visited by arrangement and were invited to events such as a Christmas meal and birthday celebrations. Staff continued to support young people when they left the home if they wanted that support.

We heard that the rules at Wheatlands were fair and sensible. Young people had negotiated incentives when they had made positive choices or had been particularly helpful. This had helped young people to see where making good decisions could benefit them and helped them to self regulate their behaviour.

## 5 Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The home was welcoming, comfortable and attractive and presented a homely environment for the young people.

A programme for redecoration was in place and young people were actively involved in helping to choose colours and soft furnishings. Because young people were involved this meant that they had more investment in keeping the house looking nice and respecting their environment. Broken items were quickly replaced and maintenance was of a high standard.

Each young person had their own bedroom which provided privacy and personal space. Young people could lock their bedroom door and also had a lockable cabinet so that they could keep their possessions safe. Staff helped young people to decorate their rooms to their own tastes.

There were enough communal rooms to allow young people to meet together if they wished and also to have privacy when they needed it.
Personal touches such as photographs helped to make the house personal to the young people. We saw the everyday things used by young people such as magazines and games were readily available. A pool table, musical instruments and games equipment evidenced that young people could enjoy their free time doing the things they liked.

Young people had helped staff to make the garden an attractive place to spend time. They had helped with planting flowers and hanging baskets and grew fruit and vegetables. They were involved in a project to restore the summer house so that they could make better use of it.

We saw that staff actively encouraged young people to treat each other with respect. There was an atmosphere of fun around the house and friendly banter between staff and young people. The young people told us that they had not experienced bullying in the home and said that Wheatlands was a safe place to stay.

Young people could be confident that staff respected their confidentiality and personal records were stored safely.

Young people were protected by appropriate security systems including CCTV. Fire safety issues were addressed quickly and managed effectively.

6 Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We found this service was continuing to perform to an excellent standard in the areas covered by this quality theme.

The staff team had received award recognition for their commitment to the young people.

In discussion we found that the staff knew the young people well. They showed a high level of motivation, warmth and commitment towards young people and wanted them to do well.

Whilst we did not examine recruitment files we were confident that the provider carried out safe recruitment effectively. There had been very minimal staff changes over the past few years and the young people benefited from the consistency of an established staff team.
Discussion with staff and observation of staff interaction with young people confirmed a positive ethos and a culture where staff provided very good role models for young people.

We saw that the young people benefitted from very positive relationships with the staff. In discussion young people spoke very highly of the support they received from all of the staff.

All of the staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and were aware of their Codes of Practice. The SSSC are the body who regulate care staff and decide the level of qualification for each post. We found that all of the staff were qualified to meet the qualification requirements of the SSSC. Staff also knew about the National Care Standards and had access to information which informed their practice.

The service demonstrated a high level of commitment to training, professional qualification and best practice. Staff members at Wheatlands were involved in training others. For example, some were trained CALM instructors and trainers in disseminating 'We can and Must Do Better' materials. This helped to build continuity and confidence within the staff team.

We saw evidence that all staff, including domestic and administrative staff, received regular supervision. Rotas were designed to enable staff to receive necessary support from senior staff. Arrangements for regular staff supervision were in place and systems had been established to identify any gaps in the supervision process. Supervision records evidenced an established monitoring and development programme for staff. Staff gave us examples of how they had used supervision effectively to reflect on their practice and identify how they could appropriately support young people.

Team meeting minutes evidenced practice discussion and information sharing. Staff told us team meetings gave them the chance to think about young people’s overall wellbeing as well as discussing issues relevant to the running of the home.

Staff told us the management team were supportive and approachable. They said that Wheatlands was a good place to work. They said that they felt supported by their colleagues.
Managers had high expectations of staff and there was a clear responsibility that staff should operate in a professional manner, with the best interests of young people being paramount within their work.

7 Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We found this service continued to perform to an excellent standard in relation to this quality theme.

The manager had a very prominent presence within the home. Staff told us that he was readily available to them and to young people. Young people gave us examples of time they spent with the manager playing pool and playing computer games. They said that he was easy to speak to and that they had a good relationship with him.

The management team met regularly to discuss practice and look for development opportunities. Senior staff had an overview of the work carried out by the staff they supervised.

The service continued to look for the views of other professionals through care planning meetings, and through discussion during visits to the service. Records indicated that staff spoke regularly with outside agencies and that they were welcomed into the home.

Staff participated in the development of the self assessment document and were consulted about its contents in supervision. The developmental action plan involved staff being delegated to lead on a number of practice and developmental areas within the home, for example, medication, training and maintenance. They provided feedback to the manager who had an overview of any action that needed to be taken to address issues. This also gave staff relevant professional development opportunities which were complimented by formal training opportunities.

Regular staff meetings and supervision allowed the staff to be consulted and informed about all aspects of the service. Staff told us that they were asked for their views and felt they could influence the development of the service.

An audit system was in place where delegated staff reported audit outcomes to the manager. This covered areas such as updating care plans, medication audits and premises audits.
All of these strategies helped to establish how well the service was operating and identify areas for development and improvement.

8 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

9 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

10 Inspection and grading history

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