

Blairvadach Residential Home Care Home Service

Helensburgh

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Unannounced

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West Dunbartonshire Council

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About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services can be found on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

The service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The Bungalows, Blairvadach is a residential house that provides long-term accommodation for up to six children and young people who are looked after and accommodated by West Dunbartonshire Council.

The property is located within a rural setting in Shandon, Argyll and Bute. During our inspection, there were five young people residing within the service. The property comprises of a large lounge, small lounge, kitchen/dining room, two bathrooms, six bedrooms and a staff office.

The area outside the property is well maintained and can be utilised to offer outdoor activities.

What people told us

"My key worker is the best. See if she says she is going to do something, she does it that day".

"I feel safe in here and I know I can trust the staff. It's a nice environment for me and I see this as my house until I am 18".

"Staff are always around. They will come and sit with me if I feel unsafe".

During our inspection, we met all the young people living in Blairvadach and spoke with each of them. We observed their interactions with staff and could see kindness, patience and respect was at the heart of their contact.

The young people all had individual plans which they were happy to talk to us about. We were hugely impressed with the ownership young people had over their care plans and they proudly showed us their progress. The connection between staff decisions and young people's wishes was heartening to observe. The young people told us that when there were consequences these were fair and discussed in detail.

The young people told us that Blairvadach was much better this year. This was mainly due to the change in the number of young people living there. All the young people had their own bedroom and we concluded that the standard of care had increased as a result. They continued to tell us that the remote location impacted upon them having easy access to family and friends.

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We considered that the standard of care and support across this theme was very good. We found major strengths that contributed to the young people being very well looked after.

The young people had developed meaningful and secure relationships with staff. The skill of staff to build relationships meant that this occurred quickly even when young people's behaviour made it difficult to engage. For one young person whose communication was limited, the staff had worked creatively to ensure their views, rights and dignity were fully respected. This young person was thriving as a result.

A major strength of Blairvadach and West Dunbartonshire HSCP is the work of the champions board. We were pleased to see the ongoing direct contact and involvement young people had with this group. One young person proudly told us that they were the chairperson of the 'blair blethers'. This is the meeting for the young people that is held monthly and gives all of them an opportunity to take ownership and feel part of the decision making within Blairvadach.

We found the staff were working incredibly hard to ensure everyone's life was moving forward. Family work is at the core of staff practice. Staff spoke passionately about supporting young people to have contact with their families and to progress contact even when the plan was not for young people to return home. Staff fully understood the need for young people to maintain contact with people in their community. This included supporting young people to see old friends and to make new ones.

School attendance was part of the culture of Blairvadach which was a marked improvement from last year. Even when young people struggled to attend, the staff had the skill to get young people there. When not in school, the young people had a varied and busy schedule with lots of group and individual activities taking place. One young person had been away with the Ocean Youth Trust and completed qualifications in sailing. A remarkable achievement that was fully supported by the staff team.

We reviewed Blairvadach's child protection policies and procedures and were confident that young people were being protected from abuse and exploitation. We heard from all the young people that staff made sure they were safe and when this wasn't the case, time was spent protecting them. The service had worked hard to build partnerships with the local police to ensure they had a joint way of working when young people found themselves in a crisis.

There is tight management of young people's health. The medication system is used effectively by all staff and overseen by excellent quality assurance systems. The young people are connected with local mental health teams and we observed strong partnership working by staff. Mealtimes have a family feel with young people sitting round the table and the cook ensures everyone enjoys healthy and tasty meals.

There was very little room for improvement within this area of evaluation. We discussed with senior managers that staff would benefit from more training in relation to theories and practice around working with families. Therefore, we were pleased to hear that senior managers had plans afoot to offer specialist attachment training for residential staff. We look forward to observing how this impacts upon their practice at next year's inspection.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We were very impressed by the manager's desire to gather feedback from all stakeholders in order to improve the service. As a result, we graded this key question as very good.

As well as lots of direct feedback from staff, the young people had fully contributed to the service development plan. The young people's ideas were incorporated into decision making and there appeared to be a continuous cycle of gathering feedback and utilising this. An example of this was young people seeking more space. Subsequently, a sun house had been creatively constructed in the grounds of the property.

All the staff we spoke with were passionate about improving Blairvadach and, as such, were invested in the quality assurance process. Staff were interested in continued improvement as opposed to resting on the current quality of service delivery. For example, the staff wanted to support each other with feedback systems and that would help their practice improve. We have agreed to support the service by linking them with organisations who can support this development.

The house manager passionately drives forward improvement. We found that they worked jointly with the staff team but ensured the service was always striving for the best possible outcomes for the young people.

During feedback, the senior managers were well informed about the areas for improvement and we collectively agreed on these. The senior managers worked closely with Blairvadach staff and regular manager's meetings provided opportunities to discuss the areas for improvement.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

During our inspection, we found high quality levels of staffing that fully met the assessed needs of the young people. On that basis, we graded this key question as very good.

The staff worked brilliantly together and this was reflected in our observations of their practice. There was a cohesion and confidence that ensured young people received consistency and structure. Where young people's needs changed, the staff found creative ways to respond to this and worked together. The result of this for one young person was an improved sleep pattern and improved health.

It was a pleasure to speak with staff who were passionate about their role. Furthermore, the new staff we met were relevantly experienced and were receiving support to work as part of the cohesive team. Safer recruitment checks were completed, and we found West Dunbartonshire were appropriately and carefully employing relevant people into the role of residential childcare worker.

The service was looking at its supervision model which the management team believed was not being utilised to its full potential. This is in the early stages of development. We have suggested the service looks at alternative models of supervision to support staff and wider service development. We will support this by directing them towards examples of best practice.

We have also asked the service to begin developing a written staffing assessment. There were no issues identified during this inspection but going forward, this will enable the service to evidence an analysis of staffing levels when considering the needs of the young people.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Blairvadach has undergone significant changes within the last year. The service has re-registered to ensure young people have their own individual bedroom. The young people told us that the environment was significantly better. However, the young people continued to feel isolated from their local community. As a result, we graded this key question as good.

We praised the managers for changing the registered status of the service. We found that this change had increased the quality of care and support.

We were pleased to see a very homely and welcoming environment. We heard from external stakeholders that they always felt welcomed and that the service was a good place to spend time. The young people told us that they liked being in the house but found the location a problem. One young person wished they could move Blairvadach closer to their local community. As a result, we found staff working hard to ensure young people had access to their families, friends and schools.

We found that the staff and manager had worked hard to push the quality of the environment forward. However, we have asked the staff and manager to continue to find ways for young people to build relationships with their peers in order to support their social development.

How well is our care and support planned?

6 - Excellent

We were incredibly impressed with the level of assessment and care planning being undertaken at Blairvadach. The young people were at the forefront of setting their outcomes. As a result, we have graded this key question as excellent.

During our discussions with young people, they happily brought their care plans to us and talked about the work they had achieved. One young person was proud of her wellbeing web and the progress this indicated. The care plans clearly belonged to the young people and they were proud of how they looked.

The direct work with young people was an outstanding strength. The staff made use of opportunities to undertake key time when the young people were relaxed and happy in their environment.

Staff regularly reviewed the needs of young people and updated the behaviour support plans and risk assessments. Young people were happy to show us their behaviour support plans which showed they agreed with the action being taken by staff. The outcome of this was young people knew what was going to happen if they took risks that were deemed unsafe. This level of joined up work between staff and young people is an example of best practice.

Progress was effectively recorded so that the young people could look at what they were achieving. When young people did achieve, this was celebrated by the manager and all the staff using the 'sparkler' award. We were told that it really mattered to young people to be rewarded for their hard work.

We have encouraged the service to continue building on this excellent practice.

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

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
4.3 Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	6 - Excellent
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	6 - Excellent

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