

# Options Fife McNally House (Residential) Care Home Service

GLENROTHES

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
18 February 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Aberlour Child Care Trust

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2021000065

## About the service

Options Fife McNally House is a care home service for children and young people with additional support needs including learning disabilities and autism. The service provider is Aberlour Child Care Trust and began providing care in May 2021.

The service provides care for a maximum of three children and young people and is situated in a residential area of Glenrothes close to local transport links and community amenities. McNally House is a bungalow with each young person having their own bedroom. There is a dining room, large communal seating area and substantial outdoor garden space.

It should be noted that this inspection took place during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and therefore followed revised methodology for conducting inspections in these circumstances.

## What people told us

During our inspection, we spent time with the three young people living at McNally, including observing staff caring for the young people. We also had contact with four parents and a variety of external professionals working alongside the service. Responses from Care Inspectorate surveys were also taken into consideration.

## 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

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care planned?	4 - Good

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?

**3 - Adequate**

We made an overall evaluation of adequate for this key question. Whilst there were some strengths, these just outweighed weaknesses.

Staff at McNally showed commitment to establishing and maintaining strong relationships with young people. One parent advised they considered that their child had 'blossomed' at McNally. Although a relatively new service, secure attachments had developed, with young people being able to express their needs. This provided a positive nurturing household.

Young people were having fun with staff - particularly in the outdoor area, and there was genuine affection, reassurance and hugs shown towards the young people, supporting positive experiences.

The service successfully demonstrated respect and dignity towards the young people, both in their interactions and record keeping.

We found that staff were consistent in representing and advocating on behalf of the young people. One professional advised that the service had been proactive and advocated to get occupational health services involved to ensure improvements were made. These actions ensured that the young people's needs were met, and barriers overcome.

Staff actively encouraged and provided opportunities for young people to gain new experiences by enabling young people to take risks and develop confidence whilst staying safe. Young people were engaged in a variety of activities and the service had overcome barriers to ensure interests could be pursued. This approach reduced restrictions on what the young people could become involved in, ensuring the young people's wishes were taken into account.

McNally positively encouraged the young people to engage in their care and support. Their bedrooms were personalised, they were involved in choosing the new carpet in the house and daily logs had been adapted to ensure they were more interactive with the young people and included photographs capturing activities. Staff members commented that the young people were at the centre of everything the service aimed to achieve. As a result, young people were able to effectively participate and contribute to the environment and care they received.

The service was familiar with various communication aids helping the young people express themselves and participate in their care and support. Staff did note that training in this area could be enhanced to improve how they communicate with young people.

The service was committed and enthusiastic to ensuring young people had positive routines through a wide range of well planned and creative activities. The young people each had weekly planners and staff had a strong understanding of the preferences of the young people. McNally House made use of the extensive outdoor space, and there were also regular group activities and theme nights introducing the young people to new cultures and experiences. One parent advised that McNally had been really successful in getting their child to go out and about - something they had not managed as a family for a number of years. Another parent remarked that McNally had managed to get their child involved in lots of activities away from the computer. As a result, young people were living in an environment which was encouraging and stimulating.

Family time was a priority for the service and significant effort was made to ensure young people maintained important connections. Technology was also regularly used to communicate with family. One parent told us that they felt really included and welcomed by McNally. This enabled the young people to maintain and develop relationships with those who were important to them.

Young people were consistently praised for achievements, and progress was encouraged. This was seen in a variety of ways including education success and becoming more independent with personal care tasks. One young person attended a specialist education school on a full time basis and although not within the catchment area, McNally facilitated attendance. Another young person was being supported to attend a local college. When formal education was not in place, the importance of structured activities, learning experiences and life skills for the young people was recognised. One parent advised that their child had become more independent by brushing their teeth and washing themselves. As a result, the young people were able to get the most out of life.

The young people had a strong network of support outwith McNally, including professionals and family. However recent child protection/welfare matters raised concern regarding staff being able to appropriately identify and respond to indicators of concern, especially given the young people were unable to communicate their experiences. McNally subsequently engaged with other professionals regarding matters and carried out their own investigation. The service needs to ensure that child and adult protection processes are a key priority and staff are provided with ongoing training in this area to enhance staff confidence and ensure the required safeguards for young people are in place (see area for improvement 1).

Staff were skilled at being able to recognise and respond to the needs of young people when they became distressed. This supported a nurturing environment with young people showing secure attachments towards some of the staff. The service has a process in place to record incidents and does not use restraint. The service was proactive and demonstrated well established links with other agencies to ensure that comprehensive health assessments for the young people were undertaken to support the young people with some significant health needs.

The service was committed to ensuring young people had the highest attainable standard of personal care and had introduced improvements to processes to ensure this was consistently maintained.

There were weaknesses in the management of young people's medication which raised concern regarding the potential for harm. Although the service has taken positive action to begin to address this, McNally must review their medication process, to make the necessary improvements to safeguard young people (see area for improvement 2).

We observed the young people having access to a range of healthy snacks and nutritious foods. Staff provided the young people with choice and new experiences regarding their meals, and they benefitted from both eating with other young people and staff or alone.

## Areas for improvement

1. To keep young people safe and and improve staff confidence, the service should ensure that child and adult protection processes are reviewed, with staff being provided with ongoing training in this area.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. (HSCS 3.20)

2. To safeguard and promote young people's health and wellbeing the service must improve their management of medication.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes. (HSCS 3.14)

## How good is our leadership?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate as there are some strengths but these just outweigh weaknesses.

There is a service development plan in place which could be strengthened by being more specific, with greater detail in terms of identifying desired outcomes, how these will be achieved, by when and how the service will measure progress and achievement. This will enhance self evaluation and ensure the direction of McNally, improving outcomes for young people.

In terms of availability of management, staff felt supported and listened to by the manager and advised that suggestions were welcomed. Staff members stated that they felt valued, and able to raise any issues with management. Professionals also commented on the strong leadership and communication of the service manager.

External management was in place, with additional oversight from the senior operational team who received updates regarding key developments in the service. This process could be enhanced by the senior leadership team being provided with greater detail regarding staffing capacity, training needs and operational requirements. This would ensure additional monitoring of the quality of young people's experiences.

The service had some quality assurance processes in place, and there are service plans to improve care plan auditing. Audits relating to health and safety matters were in place, however the effectiveness of these was not always clear and capacity to complete these within the service timescales had at times proved difficult. Care plan file audits were undertaken by external management. The planning processes for young people would benefit from additional scrutiny regarding the quality and content of the care plans (see area for improvement 1).

The service had an effective process for monitoring and analysing incident records and these are overseen by the service manager, external manager and the quality and improvement team. This process supports staff debriefing and encourages learning and reflection so that improvements to young people's experiences can be made.

### Areas for improvement

1. To support the continuous evaluation of outcomes for young people and ensure oversight of the quality of young people's experiences, the service should review their audit and quality assurance processes.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes. (HSCS 4.19)

## How good is our staff team?

## 3 - Adequate

This key question is evaluated as adequate. Strengths have had a positive impact, however improvements could be made in key areas.

Staff described positive and supportive working relationships at McNally House, with a culture that encouraged communication and flexibility. As a result, the team were motivated and there was a warm atmosphere.

Since opening, there have been challenges relating to staffing levels for the service, with a reliance on agency staff at times. This has the potential to adversely affect continuity and relationships with the young people. The service does aim to use specific agency staff, and involve them in training, with a recruitment drive underway. Future staffing stability will enable the service to undertake an analysis of staffing levels and skills mix to most effectively meet children's needs.

Staff generally considered that the service had a good skills mix with adequate staffing levels, enabling quality time to be spent with young people. The team had newer staff members, and the service must be mindful of providing adequate support. It was pleasing that McNally had put in place an induction programme for new staff as this had not previously been available when the service opened.

Individual training records were provided, and it was concerning that there were some significant gaps in staff completing mandatory training identified by the service. Due to shift commitments, staff had not always had the opportunity to complete specific courses. The service must ensure that all training needs are brought up to date, as this will improve staff skills and knowledge to confidently and safely meet the needs of the young people (see area for improvement 1).

The process of staff analysis would benefit from the manager having an oversight of individual training needs to ensure those with the right skills are working at all times.

Some staff told us that formal supervision had not been taking place consistently, and team meetings were rare. The manager planned to progress this as staff were not having the opportunity to develop their professional skills and explore practice issues to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people (see area for improvement 1). Given the reliance on specific core agency staff, the service may also want to consider the supervision arrangements for those workers to ensure they are effectively able to meet the diverse needs of the young people.

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure young people's needs are fully met by a staff group with the appropriate skill mix, the service should ensure that staff are given the opportunity to undertake the required training. This would be further enhanced by regular supervision and practice discussions.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.

**How good is our setting?****5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good as the service demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for young people.

The young people at McNally were from the local area and as a result were close to family. There was a strong commitment from staff to support regular family time. This included family visiting the house, technology being used to support young people to stay in touch and daily updates to parents by staff. This encouraged consistent relationships to be maintained between the young people and family members.

McNally is close to local facilities and there was evidence of numerous activities being undertaken by young people, with the service putting significant effort into enhancing the opportunities available to young people. There was a well maintained, stimulating outdoor area where the young people have space to take part in their individual interests and were seen having fun.

Education provided one young person with a meaningful link to the local community and the service was actively pursuing a local college course for another. Staff supported young people to use public transport and they also made use of local parks and shopping facilities.

Additionally, two of the young people were involved in local sports activities in the community and were supported by staff to attend weekly. This meant that relationships with peers could be developed with the opportunity to be active.

**How well is our care and support planned?****4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as there were several important strengths which outweighed areas for improvement.

Personal care plans for the young people were organised and well presented and we were able to get a sense of the individual young people. These included some good details regarding strengths, support needs and likes and dislikes. The plans identified behaviours that each young person may present with, including triggers and prevention strategies. This information enabled staff to build positive relationships and deliver individual support.

The care plan documents were not written in a SMART format, so it was difficult to identify specific goals, how they were being measured along with timescales. The service had separate personal goals documents and daily logs with some good evidence of progress being recorded. The service could support staff to be more informed regarding planning objectives, including the goals and outcomes they were supporting. The majority of families and other professionals commented on the high level of communication from McNally, with clear multi agency planning and staff taking the lead when young people's circumstances changed. Not all parents were aware of McNally's care plans and the service should ensure that young people and key individuals can regularly contribute to the planning process. This is to support progress and assist the service to deliver effective care for the young people (see area for improvement 1).

Personal planning documents were tailored to each of the young people's needs, strengths and preferences. Although not all young people were able to be directly involved in this process, information from family members and other professionals had been sought and young people were encouraged to make their wishes and preferences known. This ensured the care and support accurately reflected their needs.

## Areas for improvement

1. To support effective planning for young people the service should ensure care plans are SMART, outcome focused and support young people and key individuals to contribute.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care (HSCS) 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).

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	3 - Adequate
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	3 - Adequate
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	3 - Adequate

How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
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3.3 Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community	5 - Very Good
How well is our care planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

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