

Sunderland House Care Home Service

Dunoon

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 January 2026

Service provided by:
Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2006008009

Service no:
CS2025000310

About the service

Sunderland House is care home run by the organisation Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd. It provides care and support for up to three young people.

The service is based in a large, detached house with an enclosed garden in Dunoon. The service is registered to provide care and support to three young people. All young people have their own bedrooms, some with ensuite shower rooms, in addition to a communal living area, and a kitchen with dining area.

At the time of the inspection, there were two young people living in Sunderland House.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 January 2026 between 10:30 and 19:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two people using the service and one of their family members
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- Young people were kept safe and felt secure within the service.
- Young people experienced respect and their views helped to shape their care and support.
- There were positive connections with external professionals and other important people in the lives of young people.
- Young people had opportunity to pursue their interests and individual strengths were promoted.
- There was a sustained improvement in the culture within the service and this was driven by the aspirations and leadership of managers in the service.
- The quality of relationships between staff and young people was recognised as a key strength.
- Young people were supported to achieve positive physical and mental health.

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 rights and wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
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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 rights and wellbeing?

5 – Very Good

We found significant strengths in care provided by the service and impact these had on the outcomes for young people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people were kept safe and well supported within the service. Positive relationships were a clear strength of the service, with interactions characterised by trust, warmth, and respect. Young people spoke positively about opportunities to pursue their interests and enjoying a variety of experiences with staff. Young people felt comfortable in the home and confident that staff were available to support them.

There was a shared sense of pride among the team regarding the progress of the service and the positive outcomes achieved by young people. Young people were listened to and respected which resulted positive progression. Significant investment in the home environment had resulted in a well maintained, nurturing setting, which staff and young people were proud of.

The service had established strong connections with important people in each young person's life and maintained effective communication with key professionals. Staff advocated strongly on behalf of young people when required. External professionals spoke highly of the quality of care provided. Maintaining family relationships was a particular strength; for example, the service played an instrumental role in supporting one young person to sustain positive family connections, with family viewed as an extension of the service.

One family member told us the service "goes above and beyond. Nothing is ever a problem. They have helped immensely."

Support for education was robust. Young people were assisted to access learning through home education or school attendance, and staff proactively promoted individual skills and strengths. The service had contributed positively to educational outcomes through consistent encouragement and advocacy.

Risk assessments were detailed, current, and clearly set out strategies to support each young person. Staff showed a strong understanding of individual triggers and responses, and this was reflected in both documentation and practice.

Matching and admission processes were thorough, with consideration given to group dynamics and the potential impact of new young people joining the home. This was an area that had improved from previous inspections. The development and use of matching documents was helpful alongside the management oversight over this process.

Some areas for development were identified in relation to Care Inspectorate notifications. While internal recording was strong and procedures were followed, not all notifiable events had been fully processed in line with procedure. Although this requires development, there was evidence this was addressed during the inspection and there is confidence in the service's strong capacity to improve.

Young people were involved in shaping their care. Key time sessions were used effectively for relationship building. Young people experienced positive health outcomes, with improvements noted in emotional wellbeing and mental health. Staff supported young people to develop interests, confidence, and life skills, offering a range of meaningful activities.

Mealtimes were observed to be calm, sociable, and well structured, providing regular opportunities for communication and positive interaction. The overall environment resembled a supportive and nurturing family home.

We identified a significant strength in the service's positive and supportive culture, which was clearly evident throughout the house. This culture reflects the strong and consistent leadership provided by the management team over recent years.

Managers demonstrated a clear and well-articulated vision for the service, with their improvement journey firmly aligned to the principles of the promise. Their commitment to embedding trauma informed practice was consistently demonstrated in daily operations and staff interactions. The ethos and aspirations of the house serve as a testament to the stability, visibility, and leadership of the management team.

Staff have continued to progress confidently in their roles, benefiting from a wide range of learning opportunities designed to enhance their therapeutic and trauma informed practice. This includes access to specialist trauma training, which has strengthened staff skills and helped ensure they are well equipped to support young people with complex needs.

Training records reviewed during the inspection verified that staff have engaged meaningfully in these opportunities. Staff displayed confidence in child protection procedures and understood their responsibilities, with regular updates to protection training noted.

Staff spoke positively about their development and reported feeling well supported through regular supervision. Staff were confident that the organisation invests in their ongoing learning and professional growth.

Since the previous inspection, the service has undergone a period of notable change, most significantly a reduction in its registered capacity from five young people to three. The service provided a clear rationale for this decision, highlighting the positive impact it has had on the overall functioning of the house and outcomes for young people.

The service has also benefitted from a sustained period of stability within the staff team. Managers told us reduced capacity has helped improve recruitment and retention. As a result, the service benefitted from a skilled, experienced and settled team. Staffing levels and skill mix on each shift were appropriate and enable the development of secure, trusting relationships between staff and young people. Staff reflected that the current level of stability represents a significant improvement compared with previous years.

Teamwork within the service was strong. Staff described open communication, mutual respect and healthy approaches to resolving difficulties, both within the team and in interactions with young people. An example provided was the practice of beginning each new day with a fresh outlook, regardless of challenges that may have occurred previously.

We found robust quality assurance systems were in place, with regular oversight from senior staff and managers. However, audits would benefit from clearer SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and Timebound) objectives, particularly in identifying responsibility and timescales for completion.

Induction processes were found to be comprehensive, structured, and well paced to ensure new staff felt supported and confident in their roles. The service had a clear workforce development plan that reflected staffing decisions, individual strengths, and staff wellbeing.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The provider must ensure that young people who come to live at Sunderland House do so in a planned and robustly assessed way that follows best practice guidance, ensures a smooth and trauma-informed transition, and considers the needs of the young people already resident in the house.

This area for improvement was made on 17 June 2024.

Action taken since then

We could see an improvement to the approach and analysis around arrivals. This included a much better consideration of those young people already living in the house and matching documents. The area for improvement was Met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Young people will be cared for by qualified, trained and equipped staff who have the correct values and an ability to understand the experiences of young people.

This area for improvement was made on 17 June 2024.

Action taken since then

We found the service had benefitted from sustained period of stability within the staff team with improvement around recruitment and retention. As a result, the service now benefits from a skilled and experienced team. This area for improvement was Met.

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 rights and wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	5 - Very Good

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