

Atha Mhor Close Support Care Home Service

Newtonmore

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 February 2026

Service provided by:
Applied Care & Development Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003003432

Service no:
CS2005098750

About the service

Atha Mhor Close Support is a registered care home service provided by Applied Care & Development Limited. The service is located in Newtonmore, within the Cairngorms National Park. The service provides care to a maximum of four children and young people.

The property is a double-storey detached house set within its own grounds. There are seven bedrooms, one en suite, bathroom, living room and a kitchen with dining room. The house has space for parking, a garden and a summer house. The living areas are maintained to a high standard.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. The inspectors visited on 17 February 2026 between 13:45 and 17:45 and 18 February 2026 between 09:30 and 13:30.

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 throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- met three young people
- spoke to three family members
- spoke to five members of staff and management
- spoke to four representatives from social services, social care and education services
- reviewed survey responses from young people, staff and external professionals
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed key documents.

Key messages

- Young people felt safe and liked where they stayed.
- Staff worked hard to create a welcoming home and warm relationships with young people.
- Staff supported young people to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting them, including supporting access to legal advice and advocacy support.
- Young people were supported to keep in touch with people important to them.
- The manager had worked hard to develop a stable staff team, and a culture of learning and reflection.

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

This inspection considered our Key Question 7: How well do we support children and young people's rights wellbeing? We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths were identified in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Staff had an understanding of keeping young people safe, both emotionally and physically. All staff had an understanding of child protection, adult protection and whistleblowing procedures. Young people told us that they felt safe and well cared for. When this had been more challenging, staff worked well with other agencies. This was to ensure preventative, risk assessed practice was implemented to support young people. Family members and stakeholders, likewise, commented that young people were supported to be kept safe. One stakeholder commented: "I've found their approach to be proactive, reliable, and centred on the young person's needs."

Staff prioritised relationships with young people. These relationships were described as warm, nurturing and family orientated. Likewise, family commented that staff "go above and beyond" and stakeholders commented that Atha Mhor was welcoming, friendly and homely. Relationships with young people were informed by staff's knowledge of trauma and children's rights, and this was reflected in young people's care planning documents. The staff team's skillset and knowledge base was proportionate to their role and level of experience. It was pleasing that the manager was committed to the ongoing development of staff skills, knowledge and experience to continue to improve outcomes for young people.

There was an emphasis on children's rights, connection and fun. There was championing of young people's rights and views which were encouraged and respected. Young people also had access to independent legal advice and advocacy support. Young people were also supported to attend meetings and had individual time with staff. This meant young people's views and wishes were embedded throughout key documents, and their views acted upon where possible.

Atha Mhor was welcoming, homely and maintained to a high standard. This ensured that respect was reflected in the quality of the environment and resources available to young people.

Young people were supported with their physical and mental health needs, and had access to routine or specialised appointments. The service was continuing to develop ways to support young people with their mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as further specialised development opportunities for the staff team.

Important connections were championed, and young people felt supported to keep in touch with people important to them. All family members felt that the time they spent with their children was fully supported by staff. It was pleasing that young people spent time with friends, and staff were flexible in supporting young people with these important connections.

Young people's individual ambitions, interests and life skills were supported and developed. This included days out, holidays, cooking, promoting healthy habits and opportunities to promote independence.

Young people received individually tailored support to participate in learning, accessing further education or employment opportunities. Positive learning opportunities were created to support routines, purpose and a sense of achievement for young people.

The support young people received was multi-agency, co-ordinated and reflected in key documents. All young people had care plans and risk assessments in place. Care plans were clear, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound), respectfully written, and reflected the individual young person's views. Risk assessments could be further developed by ensuring strategies to support young people are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound) to support therapeutic care. It was pleasing that service development plans were in place to support the identification of goals for young people. We look forward to seeing the impact of this at future inspections.

The service prioritised stable care. Admissions and matching policies and procedures were in place, and it was pleasing that these had been carefully considered. This included meeting young people prior to their arrival. The service had completed impact assessments for all young people, and these were individual to the young person which informed how young people will be supported. There was a demonstrable and enduring commitment to young people staying in the service as they become an adult under continuing care, and this was reflected in organisational policy and young people's care planning.

The manager had worked hard to develop a stable staff team and a culture of learning and reflection. Staff commented that the manager was approachable and supportive. This was reflected in the service prioritising learning opportunities, supervision, reflective exercises and observational supervision. The stable staff team had provided consistency of care to develop trusting relationships which supported young people to achieve positive outcomes.

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

To ensure young people's safety, health and wellbeing benefited from a well-trained, consistent and knowledgeable team of staff, the service should implement a dynamic and responsive learning culture. This should include but is not limited to:

- introducing training in adult support and protection
- embedding the model of trauma-informed practice, that the service has chosen to use, in all aspects of the service
- ensuring staff receive regular, formal and supportive supervision and appraisal.

This is to ensure that 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).

This area for improvement was made on 15 May 2023.

Action taken since then

All staff had received safeguarding adults at risk training, and for those staff requiring refresher training, this was planned. All adults were clear about protection procedures in place.

All staff had an understanding of trauma, proportionate to their level of experience. Staff had completed relevant training and there was ongoing work to continue to embed the model care, with further training planned for March 2026. We look forward to seeing the impact of this at future inspections.

A supervision tracker was in place which ensured all staff had received regular, formal, and supportive supervision and appraisal. The service had introduced reflective logs and observational supervision to support ongoing staff development.

This area for improvement has been 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

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