

Aberlour Sycamore Services - Lochan Cottage Care Home Service

Fort William

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 February 2026

Service provided by:
Aberlour Child Care Trust

Service provider number:
SP2010011118

Service no:
CS2017354213

About the service

Lochan Cottage, part of Aberlour Sycamore Services, is a care home for children and young people located in Fort William. The home is a spacious property with a mix of shared and private areas, and it sits within a large, enclosed garden. The service is registered to provide care for up to four children and young people.

The service aims to provide a safe, therapeutic environment where young people can grow, develop, and build their confidence. It supports young people to strengthen their self-esteem and self worth, helping them believe in their abilities and future success.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 February 2026 between 09:15 and 19:15. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with or spent time with three people using the service and one of their family members
- received four completed questionnaires
- spoke with seven staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- Young people feel safe, protected and emotionally secure.
- Staff build consistent, nurturing relationships that support young people's wellbeing.
- Young people's voices and rights are promoted through advocacy and active participation.
- Meaningful activities and life skills support help young people grow and achieve.

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
--	---------------

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 strong, consistent practice that helped young people feel safe, valued and supported to thrive. As a result, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people feel safe and protected in their home, and staff engage with them using warmth, compassion, and respect. Staff understand each young person's needs and use risk assessments and support plans to guide daily care and decision making. We observed nurturing, trusting relationships that help young people feel emotionally secure and confident to ask for support. Staff maintained regular communication when young people are in the community and play an active role in clear and coordinated safety planning. They also participated in multi-agency meetings to review risks and share relevant information. This ensures that any protection concerns receive a prompt, well informed response, and that care arrangements remain responsive to each young person's changing needs, and positive wellbeing.

Young people are well supported to stay connected with people who matter to them. Staff promote independent advocacy, enabling young people to express their views and influence decisions affecting their lives. We heard examples of independent advocacy helping young people reconnect with family members and rebuild relationships with siblings. Staff use the Promise to reinforce young people's rights to maintain important relationships. Young people actively contribute to their care planning, sharing their views on routines, activities, and family contact. Staff also advocate strongly through education supports, safeguarding processes and multi-agency meetings. This proactive, rights based approach ensures young people's voices and wellbeing are consistently recognised and promoted.

Young people experience warmth, compassion, and consistency from a stable and skilled staff team. Staff understand each young person's emotional wellbeing and respond with reassurance, patience, and encouragement. We observed staff recognising emotional cues and providing timely support that helps young people manage feelings and develop positive coping strategies. This trauma informed approach helps young people feel reassured, understood, and valued. Staff know young people's interests, preferences, and strengths, which supports trusting relationships and positive self-esteem. Mealtimes are a particularly positive part of their home, with freshly prepared meals and shared time in the kitchen creating opportunities for connection, routine and meaningful conversations that strengthen emotional wellbeing.

Young people are encouraged to explore their interests and engage in activities that reflect their strengths and preferences. Support plans clearly outline interests and needs, enabling staff to create inclusive and motivating opportunities. During our visit, young people and staff enjoyed activities such as karaoke, cooking and pancake making. These experiences create a lively, engaging atmosphere and support positive peer and staff relationships. Staff also promote independence by supporting young people to develop practical life skills through daily routines, cooking, and shared responsibilities within their home. Young people are encouraged to participate in learning, vocational pathways, and early employment opportunities, helping them build confidence, recognise achievements, and develop skills for adulthood.

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.