

Drylaw House Care Home Service

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 December 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003010927

About the service

Drylaw Young Peoples Centre is a care home for children and young people operated by City of Edinburgh Council. The home is registered to provide a residential care service to a maximum of seven young people aged 11-20 years. The accommodation provides opportunities for young people to live in semi-independence in two self-contained flats within the main building. The accommodation is set in a residential area, close to all amenities and provides a service on a short or long term basis dependent on the needs of young people.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place onsite on 02 December 2025 between 10:00 and 19:15 and on 03 December 2025 between 10:00 and 15:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 four young people;
- spoke with six staff and managers;
- reviewed returned questionnaires from four members of staff;
- reviewed returned questionnaires from five visiting professionals;
- observed practice, the environment and daily life.

Key messages

- We were very impressed by the significant work the service had completed towards the aspirations of the promise and their plans for next steps.
- The service was particularly strong at supporting young peoples connections with the people who are important to them.
- Reflective, trauma informed practice was fully embedded into the culture of the service
- Young people's views were valued and acted upon.
- The management team had high expectations and led by example.
- Care plans and risk assessments had greatly improved and further work was planned.

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 evaluated Key Question 7.1 as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high quality care. We evaluated Key Question 7.2 as very good where there were significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children and young people. The overall evaluation from this inspection was very good.

Young people experienced very high quality care which had led to some very positive outcomes, One external professional commented, "Drylaw House have provided excellent care to the young person I work with - highly individualised and tailored to the specific needs of this young person. The young person is thriving in their care and making fantastic progress".

Close attention to individual needs meant that young people were kept emotionally and physically safe in the house. Strategies had been developed to try to keep young people safe in the community by checking their wellbeing regulatory and working closely with other services.

When young people were involved in unsafe behaviours staff expressed genuine concern for their welfare and the risks they were choosing to take. Young people who were involved in unsafe behaviours were treated with sensitive respect and nurture. They were offered realistic guidance towards safer choices and highly supported alongside other agencies such as youth justice services.

At times there had been significant risks from the behaviours of some young people and whilst risk assessments were in place, and followed, they did not prevent very unsafe incidents. Despite this, it is admirable that staff continued to fully support and sustain these young people, recognising substantial trauma and its effects on behaviours.

Child protection situations had been managed effectively, and young people were protected because staff fully understood and followed child protection procedures and guidance.

The genuine concern shown for the wellbeing of the young people was led by an embedded culture of respect and sensitivity. Recognition of trauma was central to this culture, guided by a dedicated trauma ambassador on the staff team. This was further enhanced by staff fully supporting each other to stay trauma informed through gentle reminders and regular reflection on practice.

Young people had considerably broadened their horizons through trying new experiences whilst continuing to take part in favourite activities.

The house was homely and comfortable and fully reflected the needs and tastes of the young people. One young person particularly committed on their appreciation for the peace and quiet. Ensuite bedrooms provided a high degree of privacy and comfort. The kitchen was in need of some refurbishment, and this was on the managers improvement agenda.

Close attention was paid to ensure inclusion with strong awareness of religious beliefs, cultural and individual preferences. The combination of interpreter and translation services, good use of resources and willingness to listen meant that all young people were able to stay informed and express their views.

Meaningful progress had been made in meeting the aspirations of the promise through very innovative

strategies and actions. Young people were fully included, creating a house logo and developing floor books to showcase nurturing experiences and achievements and highlighting actions to support their views. Everyone took pride in their involvement in promise activities, and a regular promise report showed valid reflection and identified next steps.

Physical and mental health was highly prioritised, and some young people had made significant progress in improved mental health. A very patient and sensitive approach enabled young people to overcome their anxieties about appointments or medical procedures. Staff demonstrated sound understanding of mental health challenges particularly in relation to trauma and worked collaboratively with health professionals to ensure that young people received the right services at the right time.

Connections with friends and family were passionately encouraged and particularly well supported. Friends and relatives were warmly welcomed into the home which helped young people to sustain strong relationships and find value in friendships. Holidays with staff had included friends and relatives which further cemented relationships and strong bonds.

Staff were ambitious for the young people and fully supported them to build self-confidence and achieve in education and employment.

Substantial work had been achieved in relation to care planning. Care plans were well organised, easy to navigate and written with thought to trauma and sensitive language. Young people's voices were captured within care plans which were SMART and linked to credible risk assessments. The provider had intention to further develop care plans.

A high level of internal monitoring with weekly audits promoted best practice.

Themed discussions around the promise and trauma informed practice highlighted the importance of trying to meet the needs of young people by listening to and respecting their voices. All staff spoke about feeling supported by managers and were knowledgeable about the promise, speaking with passion about experiences with young people.

A matching process was used to identify if Drylaw was a suitable match for prospective young people and the group. In the main this had been successful. The occasion where it was found not to have been fully effective was given due consideration and full reflection to improve the success of future placements.

The staffing needs assessment was mindful of the needs of the young people and ensured that there were enough staff, with the right skills, available at the right times.

All staff that we spoke with felt fully supported by their managers as well as with the team as a whole. Regular supervision was reported to be of high quality, guiding practice, and continuous improvement and supporting staff.

The manager was passionate about carrying forward the expectations of the promise. She delegated tasks and had a clear overview to ensure work was swiftly progressed. She had high expectations of her staff and mirrored this in her own practice.

Team meetings provided the opportunity for staff to present their views and also represent the views of the young people. They provided a forum for staff to engage in open discussion, reflection and debate, learning from each other and past experiences.

We did not look at all recruitment documentation. However, we are assured that City of Edinburgh Council Human Resources are diligent in the recruitment of staff.

A very credible development plan Identified areas of improvement with actions, timescales, people responsible and detailed progression. Improvement points were person centred directly linking with the promise, trauma awareness and recording. Examples of feeding back progress to young people were included in the timeline, keeping their views centre to improvement.

The service delivery is fully aligned with the promise and commitment to meet the aspirations of the promise are forefront to the culture within Drylaw.

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

In order to ensure the best outcomes for young people the service should ensure that all care plans reflect SMART targets and this is evidenced in the auditing of care plans

This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Substantial work had been achieved in relation to care planning. The provider had intention to further develop care plans.

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	6 - Excellent
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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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