

Action for Children - Hillcrest Care Home Service

Stornoway

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 March 2026

Service provided by:
Action for Children

Service provider number:
SP2003002604

Service no:
CS2003009713

About the service

Action for Children - Hillcrest is a care home service provided by Action for Children. The service provides care for up to a maximum of five children and young people, including a flexible use bedroom for short breaks.

It is located in Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis, and is centrally located with access to local amenities. The service operates from a two-storey home. The house has its own driveway at the front and landscaped gardens to the rear of the property. The garden also has a summerhouse with a well-equipped sensory area.

The house has two living rooms and a kitchen dining area. There are five bedrooms with en-suite facilities. The property is maintained to a good standard, and some of the living areas are in the process of being upgraded.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. The inspector visited on 3 March between 10:15 and 18:30 and 4 March 2026 between 10:00 and 14:00.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings and registration information. We also reviewed information submitted by the service and information gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- met four young people using the service
- spoke to three family members
- spoke to 10 members of staff and the management team
- spoke to representatives from social services and advocacy services
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed key documents.

Key messages

- Staff knew children and young people well, and relationships were underpinned by dignity and respect.
- The service prioritised stable care and there was an understanding of children's rights, The Promise and continuing care.
- Children and young people were supported to maintain connections to people important to them where possible.
- Staff were committed and supported young people to make progress through their plans.
- There was an absence of robust quality monitoring which undermined confidence in the effectiveness of daily practices.
- The leadership team had taken urgent and decisive action to support staff recruitment, develop staff skills, knowledge and improve service delivery.

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?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

This inspection considered our Key Question 7: How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing? We evaluated this key question as good, where there is a number of important strengths which, taken together, outweigh areas for improvement.

Observations of young people and feedback from young people, family, stakeholders and staff indicated that people using the service felt safe. The provider had sought to ensure that staff had developed an understanding of child protection, including the provider's child protection, adult protection and whistleblowing procedures. It was pleasing that there was support to provide enhanced protection training for managers to promote effective leadership practices. We look forward to seeing the impact of this at future inspections.

We found that staff had an understanding of risk, which was documented within individual risk assessments and incident recordings. We found that the service had improved its response to notifying the Care Inspectorate. We made a requirement in our report dated 25 July 2024 in relation to submitting notifications to the Care Inspectorate. This requirement has now been met. There was an absence of robust quality monitoring which undermined confidence in the effectiveness of daily practices. This had the potential to increase the likelihood of risk. We made an area for improvement in our report dated 25 July 2024 in relation to quality assurance. This area for improvement had not been met.

Staff required to support children and young people with their health needs. The review of quality assurance and staff training records identified that the majority of staff had not received mandatory training in line with the provider's own policies. We believed that the quality and delivery of safe care could be compromised. The provider should ensure staff training plans are in place to ensure safe care and to meet the needs of young people (see requirement 1).

Staff knew children and young people well, and relationships were underpinned by dignity and respect. Family members commented that staff were "kind, caring, professional, and nurturing" and that staff "go above and beyond". This supported young people and families to build safe and trusting relationships with those supporting them.

All staff had a knowledge and understanding of emotional safety and trauma. This still required to be embedded in practice to support therapeutic work and inform strategies used to support young people.

The service had experienced a period of staff turnover, absences and vacancies. This meant there was a varied level of staff skill and experience within the team, which had impacted upon service provision. It was pleasing that the leadership team had taken urgent and decisive action to support staff recruitment, develop staff skills, knowledge and improve service delivery. We look forward to seeing the impact of this at future inspections.

The service prioritised stable care and there was an understanding of children's rights, The Promise and continuing care. Independent advocacy arrangements were in place for children and young people. This meant that young people were aware of their rights and these were acted upon where possible.

Children and young people were supported to maintain connections to people important to them where possible. Families described Hillcrest as "home from home". This helped young people feel included in their care and supported lifelong relationships.

Young people were supported to access services including health, education and day centres. Young people's individual interests were supported, such as walking, cycling, swimming, crafting, attending youth groups or using the sensory room.

Care planning documents required to be up-to-date, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound) and identify clear strategies to support young people. Ongoing staff training, service development and quality assurance processes would further enhance the quality of care planning documents and the delivery of therapeutic work with children and young people. Therefore, we look forward to seeing the outcome of this at future inspections.

Requirements

1. By 31 May 2026, the provider must ensure there is an appropriate number of staff on shift, with the correct balance of skills, training and experience to meet the health, safety and welfare needs of people.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure that:

- a) All staff have undertaken mandatory training in line with the provider's own policies.
- b) An accurate and continuous assessment of staff skills, knowledge, experience, training and numbers of staff on shift is in place.

This is in order to comply with section 7 of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is in order to comply with section 8 of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

With immediate effect, the provider must ensure that to support effective scrutiny of the service, managers submit notifications in accordance with guidance and that sufficient detail is added to accurately reflect the incident and provide assurance to the Care Inspectorate that the service is responding appropriately.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SS1 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with Records that all registered children and young people's care services must keep and guidance on notification reporting (Care Inspectorate, January 2022).

This requirement was made on 25 July 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

We found that the service had improved its response to notifying the Care Inspectorate.

Met - within timescales

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 promote high quality care and support for all young people within a culture of continuous improvement, the provider should ensure that robust quality assurance processes are in place to promote improved outcomes for young people.

This is to ensure that 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).

This area for improvement was made on 25 July 2024.

Action taken since then

Some quality assurance processes were in place to monitor aspects of service delivery. During the inspection, we provided feedback to ensure oversight and develop existing quality assurance systems.

However, we found there was an absence of robust quality monitoring which undermined confidence in the effectiveness of daily practices. This had the potential to increase the likelihood of risk.

This area for improvement has not 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?	4 - Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	4 - Good

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