

Midlothian Residential Service for Young People

Care Home Service

23 Ladybrae
Gorebridge
EH23 4HT

Telephone: 0131 270 7500

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 28 October 2016

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Care service number:
CS2003011085

About the service

This service has been registered since 2002.

Midlothian Residential Services consist of three small residential homes in Penicuik, Dalkeith and Gorebridge. Each home cares for a maximum of four young people who are usually aged between 10 and 18 years who cannot safely stay with their own family, or in any substitute family, and whose needs would best be met in a residential setting.

The homes in Penicuik and Dalkeith are purpose built single storey houses. The home in Gorebridge is an older property on two levels. All of the homes are close to local amenities and have good transport links. At the time of this inspection there were 12 young people living across the three houses.

What people told us

We spoke directly with eight young people and two relatives during this inspection. The relatives we spoke with were wholly positive about the service and specifically impressed by the efforts of staff to keep them involved. The views of young people were largely positive but there were some specific issues identified by some of the young people. For example, we heard that access to the internet was not as easy as it could be and this was for some a great source of frustration. Below are a range of comments from the young people we spoke with:

"I felt lonely at home and it's good to have people around me".

"I got on with some staff, it was awkward with the ones I didn't like".

"Good staff would help me and took me out"

"One staff member supported to make appointments and took me to the doctors etc".

"All night staff are sound".

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self-assessment from the provider. We were satisfied that the self assessment identified general evidence to be considered at the inspection and outlined areas for development consistent with the inspection findings.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

What the service does well

The service continues to help towards young people achieving good outcomes. We found that the majority of the young people have a sense of belonging and all experience nurturing care from staff working in the houses. We heard specifically of improved safety for some young people, development of independence skills, young people becoming more active and improving relationships with family.

The staff we spoke with were consistent in emphasising their relationships with young people as essential in providing nurture, influencing their behaviours and supporting good outcomes. We were satisfied that this 'relational' approach to care was a positive way of working across the staff teams. Equally evident was the commitment to working alongside families; we heard of staff going the extra mile for young people to sustain relationships and help rehabilitation home.

Leadership is effective in each of the houses, from experienced practitioners providing excellent support to front line staff and modelling good practice. Positive practice is well supported by embedded structures of support for staff. This includes regular supervision for staff, effective team meetings, on-call support, management meetings and mentoring of new staff. The specific focus of resources to provide effective support to night staff is to be welcomed, recognising the very important role staff working through the night have in the lives of the young people living in Midlothian residential services. We also heard that debriefing, following critical incidents, had improved making sure that the service and individual staff are reflecting and learning from incidents. We found that this ensured that on-going work with young people is focussed on their needs.

While there were some contradictory views the majority of evidence suggested that the professional development of staff is well supported by the provider. We would particularly highlight the quarterly staff development days as a significant opportunity for staff to be involved in service developments and to also address any gaps in knowledge. The staff we spoke with all recognised the value in the staff development days. We were satisfied that staff were being given the opportunity to improve knowledge and skills to provide the best quality of care to children and young people.

What the service could do better

To maintain the positive morale of staff and the impact this has on care for children and young people, the service should do more to ensure that transitions, and particularly endings, for young people are managed sensitively for both young people and staff.

Decisions about placements for children and young people are not always viewed positively by the staff we spoke with and a common complaint was what they saw as a lack of thought given to matching with young people living in the service. Most staff were clear that they did not have a voice in these decisions, and those where young people are moved across houses. The service should consider how it communicates with staff about decision making around placements.

As stated above strong relationships between staff and young people are very important for supporting good outcomes. We heard from young people and staff of the often abrupt movement of staff across services. This is practiced in the short term to support services where there is a need (one of the services has experienced significant turnover in the last year) but longer term moves were also mentioned during the inspection. The staff who have moved have been important to young people and we were concerned for the potential impact on children and young people of unpredictable care or the loss of key relationships. We were satisfied that the service has made coherent plans to address gaps in staffing and we look forward to seeing how continuity of care has been protected at the next inspection.

The practice of debriefing following critical incidents over the last year was described by some as having improved. We found that evidence on this was inconsistent and would suggest that the service reviews the processes used to record incidents. Records need to identify whether debriefing has taken place and more consistently include the comments of young people. We felt that this would ensure a more robust external monitoring of incidents. One specific issue we also identified during the inspection was the experience of young people witnessing incidents. We discussed this with managers and we were satisfied that this would be addressed when reviewing incident processes and we will review this at the next inspection.

A consistent theme from discussions with staff was the uncertainty around the service and the role and function of individual houses. We felt that staff were not completely confident about the vision for residential services in Midlothian. Equally they weren't sure of the role they had to play in the development of the service. We found that not all staff viewed recent changes as positive and we were concerned that this ambivalence may have a negative impact on morale. We were encouraged from discussions with senior staff that the service recognises this issue and is committed to involving staff. We were satisfied that the well established development days for could be utilised to ensure staff feel involved in developing and agreeing a vision for the services.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
23 Nov 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
28 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
7 Mar 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
23 Sep 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
26 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
17 Aug 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
12 Jan 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
21 Mar 2012	Re-grade	Care and support	Not assessed
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
5 Mar 2012	Re-grade	Care and support	Not assessed
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	1 - Unsatisfactory

Date	Type	Gradings	
7 Jun 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
21 Dec 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	2 - Weak
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
18 May 2010	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
10 Feb 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
16 Sep 2009	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
31 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
11 Feb 2009	Announced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	2 - Weak
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak

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