

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

6 NOVEMBER 2018

CARE INSPECTORATE INSPECTION OF BRAMBLE COTTAGES CARE HOME SERVICE

BACKGROUND

As a minimum, the Care Inspectorate conduct annual unannounced inspections for registered services, that is care homes for older people; care homes for adults; care homes for children and young people; support services - care at home and secure accommodation. All other services such as pre-school centres receive a minimum frequency of inspection based on an intelligence-led risk assessment and previous performance.

The inspector evaluates registered services using a framework of quality themes linked to the National Care Standards:

- Quality of care and support
- Quality of environment
- Quality of staffing
- Quality of management and leadership

Bramble Cottages Care Home Service was inspected on 2 August 2018. The inspection report was published in September 2018 and can be found at [Bramble Cottages Inspection Report](#).

Bramble Cottages is a care home service for children and young people located in purpose-built premises on the outskirts of Arbroath. It comprises two cottages, Logan and Rowan, set within extensive grounds. The service is registered to provide care for up to nine young people at any one time, with four in each cottage and the potential for an additional placement in the annexe to Logan Cottage.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION OUTCOME

What the service does well

The service was operating at a very good standard, demonstrating major strengths which supported positive outcomes for children and young people.

The service had implemented a robust admissions policy which meant that children were being admitted on a planned basis with sufficient information being gathered at the outset to assess whether the placement was right for that young person and for the other young people in the house. Even with crisis admissions, tight timescales and clear expectations of partner agencies helped to ensure that plans were made quickly, taking into account the needs of all young people. This had resulted in a much calmer and safer environment in which young people settled quickly and were making good progress.

There was evidence of well-planned individual work which promoted children's safety and wellbeing which included reduced offending, improved attendance and attainment at school, and increased ability to manage difficult emotions.

Staff adopted an individualised approach which took account of young people's age and stage of development. Alongside this, a key strength was the quality of work being done with young people's families, including supporting positive experiences with siblings and direct parenting work.

Very close attention was paid to making sure children were healthy. There was good liaison with the looked after and accommodated children (LAAC) nurse who carried out health assessments.

A major success had been the introduction of a no smoking policy, developed in line with current good practice guidance, which was discouraging young people from smoking and had helped them to reduce their nicotine intake.

There was strong partnership working, actively pursued by the service, which had led to several initiatives which were supporting good outcomes for young people. This included joint working with families, direct input into schools, and co-working with the permanence team to take forward transition planning.

There was a high quality environment; clean, bright, spacious, and in a good state of decoration and repair. Young people had been closely involved in choosing furniture, furnishings, and equipment for the shared areas of the houses. A play room had been created for a younger child and it was encouraging to hear that some of the older children had been involved in organising this. Throughout both houses, young people were encouraged to use the space and play.

Originally, the two cottages shared a large open site. However, this had recently been divided with an attractive fence, which helped each cottage to feel self-contained. The development of the garden was continuing with extensive planting and was being well used for active physical play with the addition of trampolines, bikes, and football goals.

A comprehensive range of risk assessments and health and safety checks contributed to a safe and secure environment. Improvements had been made to the security of the environment in response to a robust risk management process.

There were sufficient staff to safely meet young people's needs and that there was ongoing recruitment to maintain optimum staffing levels. Staff were recruited safely in line with Angus Council's staff recruitment procedures. There was an effective system in place for monitoring registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff that had recently been recruited were undergoing a structured and supported induction.

There was some very positive interactions between staff and young people, with staff actively engaged with young people at all times. There had been some effective, well recorded direct work with young people.

Staff had had some relevant and good quality training. Comprehensive e-learning was available. Senior staff had opportunities to develop enhanced skills. For example, as a Crisis, Aggression, Limitation, and Management (CALM) trainer and a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) assessor. The service was responsive to individual training needs and provided bespoke development opportunities, for example in child protection.

The service has made significant progress towards establishing a stable staff team through a process of ongoing recruitment, well-structured reflective supervision, and effective performance and absence management. There had clearly been a need for the staff team to recover from the challenges of the previous year and for newer staff to become fully integrated into the service. The team was now in a stronger position to move forward and build on the strengths identified at this inspection.

The new manager and depute were highly skilled and experienced and, with the support of the external manager and the service provider, have had a significant positive impact on the quality of the service which has improved in all aspects since the last full inspection. From an initial responsive action plan, there is now a clear culture of improvement and the management team have worked systematically to develop and improve the service.

Clear delineation of responsibilities between the manager and the depute has meant that the quality of care, the quality of staffing, and the quality of environment have all been able to progress at a steady pace.

Staff felt well supported. They expressed confidence in managers and felt able to contribute their ideas and skills. Managers made very good use of supervision to monitor staff practice and to support the development of high professional standards.

Effective implementation of departmental procedures in relation to absence management and staff performance have contributed to greatly improved stability in the workforce. An ongoing programme of staff recruitment was underway to maintain optimum numbers of staff within the team.

The service currently had in place a range of systems to monitor the quality of the service. This included case file audits, medication audits, and environmental checks.

The manager's links with the wider social work department had increased opportunities for the service to become more integrated into the wider context of social work and social care. This had led to improvements. For example, by increasing pocket money for young people in residential care in line with those in foster care. It had also provided staff with access to enhanced training and development opportunities.

The service had been very effectively managed and led at both strategic and service level and that this had resulted in the service being in a position to provide children with a positive, safe, and nurturing care experience.

What the service could do better

Further development of staff knowledge about child protection procedures and child sexual exploitation (CSE). This training has now taken place and staff are clear what they need to do.

Clear and consistent recording of one-to-one work. This has been addressed

Clarification of initial personal plans within 28 days of admission to the service. This has been introduced.

Amendment of minor medication issues – this has been undertaken and implemented. The quality of the one to one work is varied and there was scope to improve the consistency of quality of staff input into direct work through further training and development. This is being addressed on an ongoing basis.

There was no overarching staff training plan, however, this is something the service is planning to develop. There is a central record of staff training which was accessed during inspection. There needs to be some work done to amalgamate the individual training recorded in supervision records alongside the council's system for recording training.

The service should review its system for keeping records of incidents, which could potentially lead to child protection procedures, and the process for notifying the Care Inspectorate of these. A new process has been developed.

The service needs to develop a quality assurance framework to cover all aspects of quality monitoring within the service with clearly defined timescales and lines of accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no recommendations

REQUIREMENTS

There were no requirements

INSPECTION GRADES

Quality of care and support	5 - Very good
Quality of environment	5 - Very good
Quality of staffing	4 - good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very good

Contact for further information:

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