

Thor House (Care Home) Care Home Service

Provost Cormack Drive
Thurso
KW14 7EJ

Telephone: 01847 896 448

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 June 2023

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003008449

About the service

Thor House is situated in Thurso, close to the community and shops. It is currently registered to provide care to a maximum of four children or young people with learning disabilities, additional or complex needs.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 June 2023. 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 three people using the service and one of their family/friends/representatives
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- The young people at Thor House were thriving and achieving.
- The new manager had worked hard to make positive changes.
- Staff were committed to supporting the young people.
- The service was pro-active in seeking external agencies for support.
- The house was very homely and nurturing.
- The service was in the process of embedding a trauma informed approach.

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

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| 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

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

We found that the manager was pro-active in recognising the risks for young people, and seeking further support from external agencies. Staff told us "We get really good support from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and they are always there to support us and the young people." There was clear evidence that the staff had been working hard to engage with young people to help them work through any worries or anxieties that they had. We found this had led to young people feeling safe and positive outcomes.

The service had built up a good relationship with Who Cares (independent advocacy) who visited several times a month. The young people appeared to have built up a good relationship with them and knew they could ask them for support. We did not find any instances of bullying within the house, and were assured that if this did arise young people would be supported appropriately.

The new manager had worked hard to embed a therapeutic approach in the house. We found that the majority of staff were confident in this approach and gave clear examples of how they implemented this in daily practice. We also observed some lovely interactions where staff supported young people to reflect on their day and support them through any difficulties they had. Young people told us "The staff are really good." The staff team were also impressed at the level of knowledge the new manager had of the young people and how this was helpful in supporting staff when they needed. There had also been consideration given to the need to have regular staff who were there consistently to build strong relationships. This allowed young people to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.

The house had a lovely homely feel, and we observed staff to nurture the young people and give them the opportunity to make lifelong memories. One young person told us "I'm going on a plane for the first time." Other young people were being supported into university, employment and had achieved great success in school. The staff were committed to supporting the young people with their future goals and had taken great pride in sharing the achievements they had recently made. This allowed young people to feel that Thor House was their home and build trust in those who were caring for them.

Since our last inspection the service had developed individual care plans. We found that within this process they had included the young people's views, which was helpful in ensuring they are well supported. We found this made the document more meaningful, and included the young people to feel listened to.

The service was committed to ensuring young people stayed connected to their family. They regularly supported young people to spend time with their family, and extended periods over the holidays. Staff were able to understand the needs of the family and the support they needed to ensure they continued to build positive lifelong relationships.

We joined all of the young people and staff for a BBQ in the garden. There was a wide range of options available, and staff had been creative in the way which they presented healthier options which encouraged young people to eat them too. Young people told us "The food is good, and we get to help in the kitchen." Staff understood the importance of food for young people and ensuring they had options which they liked.

Staff told us "The manager is brilliant." We found this change had led to staff having confidence in their practice, and feeling supported from management. The manager had introduced regular team meetings and development days to ensure staff were fully involved in decisions which were made and had the opportunity to develop. This led to young people having staff who listened to them and provided them with nurture.

We recognised due to the added pressures of deputy manager not being in position until more recently, some areas still required development. We were reassured that the manager had already identified this, and was working to ensure these would be prioritised. The development plan still was in the processes of being composed. However we were able to see the information had been collated to inform this through the development days held, and listening to staff. **(See 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection?' area for improvement 2.)**

We found there needed to be the development of better quality assurance systems for training and young people's files. Staff had undergone the relevant training, however, this was not reflective of the oversight management had. Young people's files did not have an auditing system, and we thought this may be helpful in ensuring risk assessments were effective in recognising risk for young people and how these are supported pro-actively and in response to the risk.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 1 September 2022 the provider must ensure that they develop individual care plans for the young people in their service. To do this the provider must at a minimum:

a) ensure these documents should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) and have a focus on the young people's views, goals, routines, and reviewed regularly.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met as well as my choices. (HSCS 1.15)

This requirement was made on 31 August 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service had introduced individual personal plans for the young people, which reflected the care and support they required.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 1 August 2022, the provider must ensure they inform the Care Inspectorate of any instances within the service which have the potential to cause harm. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) notify the Care Inspectorate within 24 hours of the event
- b) ensure they are aware of the Care Inspectorate guidance for notifications, and notify them of all events stated within the guidance.

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

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 qualities.' (HSCS 4.19)

This requirement was made on 31 August 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

We found the service had been notifying the Care Inspectorate of any incidents required.

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 support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure there is access to wifi in the house for the young people.

This should include, but is not limited to, access to wifi to allow young people to interact online or complete school work.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If I experience 24 hour care, I am connected, including access to a telephone, radio, TV and the internet.'
(HSCS 5.10)

This area for improvement was made on 31 August 2022.

Action taken since then

The wifi has been restored to the house and the internet connectivity has improved.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should implement a development plan.

This should include, but is not limited to, a plan of the year ahead identifying areas for development of the service to help improve the service and 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 experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 31 August 2022.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement was not met and will remain in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure quality assurance systems are being used effectively, in particular regards to training and developing the teams skills base around trauma informed practice.

This should include, but is not limited to, training in childhood trauma and more effective use of tracking training completed by staff.

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 31 August 2023.

Action taken since then

We found there had been a focus on providing multiple training opportunities in regards to trauma informed practice. This had lead to a strong ethos being developed in the house where staff understood young people's needs.

This area for improvement has 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

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| 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 | 5 - Very Good |

7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights

4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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