

Woodlea Cottage Care Home Service

Woodlea Cottage
Muirend Road
Burghmuir
Perth
PH1 1JU

Telephone: 01738 474700

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

5 March 2020

Service provided by:

Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:

SP2003003370

Service no:

CS2009236865

About the service

Woodlea Cottage is a service providing short break care for up to five children aged from seven to 18 years, with severe, complex and enduring needs arising from physical and learning disabilities. Children using the service can do so for up to 28 consecutive days. The service is provided by Perth and Kinross Council. The service registered with the Care Inspectorate in April 2011.

Woodlea Cottage was purpose built in 2010 and is situated in a residential area of Perth, about a mile and half west of the city centre. All areas accessed by children using the service are on the ground floor. They include an open plan living room and dining room, kitchen and five bedrooms, each with an adjacent shower or bathroom. Two of the bedrooms have built in ceiling hoist. The premises also has a sensory/art room, staff offices, a laundry and a medical room. At the rear of the building is a fenced garden leading directly from the living room. The premises can be accessed by wheelchair.

The service's aims and objectives include:

- Enabling all children and young people to realise their potential and become as independent as possible.
- Supporting young people to become effective contributors, responsible citizens, confident individuals and successful learners.
- Working with children/carers in respect of all planning and decision-making. Actively seeking the views of parents and other key agencies in making decisions to improve the quality of service and to ensure decisions are communicated.
- Providing a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment.
- Ensuring children and young people are safe and protected.
- Using a quality assurance framework to evaluate and review the quality of the work and to make improvements as needed.
- Recognising and celebrating achievement of all children and young people.

What people told us

We observed and interacted with all children who had attended Woodlea Cottage for short break care during this inspection.

We spoke with one child directly who had shown us around the building with the help of a staff member; she was very excited to do so and was clearly happy and relaxed with all staff. She told us that she "loved everything and everyone" and commented on how much she loved her bedroom at Woodlea.

We spoke to seven parents. All told us that they knew their child's care plan well and spoke of the of regular and helpful communication from staff at the service.

We heard that food, activities and personalised bedrooms were tailored to meet the needs of their child to make sure they were happy and safe at Woodlea Cottage.

Comments included:

"The service has been invaluable to our family. They are always on hand to help out when they can if we have additional or unforeseen needs in relation to visits. Staff have also helped with sleep issues that my child had; things are much improved. Great service".

"We were a little anxious at first but staff have been amazing. The service works really closely with the school our child attends. There is instant communication, via diaries from home to school to the service and then back again! This is really good and reassuring"..

"My child loves to go (to Woodlea) she really looks forward to it and is always happy when she comes back".

"Staff at Woodlea have been fantastic, from the initial stages to help our whole family get to know the service, to the regular reviews where we all get round the table and share information. Very good service, great team".

"Staff really know my child now. He is very happy and comfy there".

"Dates are given to us well in advance. The cottage has a great homely atmosphere. My child asks to go there all the time! Staff make sure that he is given opportunities to "help around the house" as this is what he likes to do and he gets lots of praise for doing tasks. He also loves their great outside garden; it is huge, safe and he loves the trampoline and the jacuzzi especially".

"They (the service) keep us involved all the time through regular newsletters, texts, and reviews. There are also events such as Christmas parties and open days and these are really good because it gives us a chance to get to know other parents".

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 wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	not assessed
How good is our staffing?	not assessed
How good is our setting?	not assessed
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

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 wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

From our observations of staff interaction with children and young people at Woodlea Cottage, it was clear that all enjoyed loving and compassionate care from staff who had ensured that they experienced a nurturing environment where they could have fun and learn in a safe and secure environment.

The majority of children and young people observed at Woodlea had significant and complex learning and physical disabilities and almost all required a one to one ratio of staff and constant supervision to ensure their physical safety and emotional wellbeing.

We saw that throughout their interactions with the children, staff had maintained relaxed and sensitive care practices and had shown utmost respect for the dignity and personal care needs of all children observed. For example, we saw that children who had become emotionally distressed when the activity chosen had not met their sensory or intimate needs, were gently guided by staff to more suitable areas within the house such as safe spaces and sensory bedrooms.

We felt that the above approach promoted respect for the dignity and privacy needs of the young person while supporting others within the service to continue their activities in a calm and happy environment.

We found that children of a different ethnicity and culture were well integrated within the house and their specific needs and culture was recognised and celebrated. Staff had a good understanding of diversity and were well informed and able to advocate for children through their close working relationships with social work and children's rights services within the local authority area.

We found that children and young people had a variety of ways of expressing their views. These had included the use of extensive resources to assist communication such as Makaton and pictorial aids to ensure that all children were able to make choices of food and activities and to express their moods and particular likes and dislikes on each visit, for example. Child friendly 'questionnaires' on their stay at Woodlea Cottage allowed children and young people to express their opinions and had also noted their achievements during each visit. We felt that these communication aids supported each child or young person to maximise his or her participation in the service and where possible to enhance or influence the care they experienced.

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

We found that children and young people at Woodlea had experienced a wide range of activities purposefully chosen to ensure that each child had fun while learning and achieving their goals and maximising their potential. For example we saw that children had enjoyed outdoor play in the services large, secure garden which was fully equipped with a range of sensory equipment and a trampoline. Other children enjoyed outings to the local park and to local shops and leisure facilities in small groups.

A wide array of appropriate toys and games were enjoyed and we saw that some children had their own personal items which they kept in the service or brought in to the service with them.

We felt that the above nurturing and individualised approach supported children to experience a wide variety of in and outdoor experiences which promoted all aspects of their health and wellbeing.

We saw that the service had particularly close liaison, planning and information sharing with a local specialist primary school attended by children with disabilities. We felt that this process had promoted positive outcomes for children who attended the service. For example one child had continued to practice his skill in walking unaided for a short period by venturing out with staff in to the service's garden area, another had been further supported to eat a full meal at dinner time. These achievements were shared by all services and parents of the children and young people.

Since the last inspection we found that four young people had left the service and had made the transition to adult service, two of whom had moved to supported accommodation having met at the Woodlea service. Support from all four parents, communicated through exit questionnaires was consistently positive. One parent wrote: "The service was brilliant with my son. They helped him to be so independent and do things we never thought he could do". Another commented: "Staff (at Woodlea) were pivotal in turning my son's life around when things seemed bleak".

We noted that all children and young people were kept safe at Woodlea. We found that a high number of staff, including those in management positions, were very experienced within the service. Staff had training in child protection and safe guarding which had been regularly updated and all of those spoken to had undertaken a range of specialist training which further helped them to support children with learning and physical disabilities. We felt that this provision assured that children and young people were well supported by staff who were appropriately skilled and knowledgeable about their role.

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

We saw that children and young people's health and wellbeing had benefited from the care and support received at Woodlea Cottage.

We saw that the service had a robust medication system in place which had been audited in triple by staff who were very knowledgeable about the skills and protocols used in the preparation and administration of medication to children and young people, many of whom had complex medical conditions. We were able to observe this system in practice with one young person and noted that safe use of the system in place was adhered to by staff.

We saw that when supply staff were required these roles were very often undertaken by staff from the local specialist school who work directly with many of the children who had attended the service, or those who were in roles as personal support assistants within other local schools.

We felt that this approach had supported children and young people to experience continuity of care from staff skilled, experienced and confident in meeting their needs in respect of their mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

A number of children and young people who attended Woodlea for short break care could tolerate only limited food types and textures and some had specific dietary requirements. We saw that the promotion of a healthy varied diet was encouraged. For example, we saw that the service's cook had discussed their dietary needs with parents when their child was first introduced and had ensured that children were given choices in relation to the menu when they visited.

We observed that staff employed soothing and reassuring techniques such as singing and rhythmic voice tones with children who required help with feeding and this had encouraged them to relax and enjoy their meals. We thought that this nurturing and highly personalised approach helped to promote health and wellbeing for children and young people at Woodlea Cottage.

We saw that staff at Woodlea had assumed a respectful and calm approach with children whose behaviour could reach an emotionally heightened state within a short period of time, and whose distress could be expressed in an overtly aggressive manner. We observed staff's consistent use of positive behaviour and de-escalation techniques based on the detailed knowledge of the young person. Physical intervention was used only to prevent harm and as a last resort and this, we felt, further supported positive outcomes for the children and young people who had visited Woodlea for a short break.

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

How good is our leadership?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our staff team?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our setting?

This key question was not assessed.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

Overall, we saw that there was a culture of inclusiveness and continuous learning within the staff group at Woodlea Cottage. The external manager, who visited in his role as improvement officer, knew the children as did the cook and domestic assistant; all were considered to be valuable members of the team. We felt that this approach allowed for a breadth of views to be incorporated in to children's personal care plans to help ensure that positive outcomes were consistently met.

We saw that robust, child centred care planning documentation had been completed in respect of each child who had received a service at Woodlea Cottage. Based on the SHANARRI indicators: (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) all plans examined had used extensive communication tools to help children to contribute as fully as possible and to make active choices in relation to all aspects of their care.

From our file reading we could see that well planned and updated risk assessments and behaviour management plans had been completed in respect of each child. These documents provided both a thorough overview of each child's plan and a clear understanding of the support each child required in relation to their specific disabilities.

We saw that internal reviews, attended by relevant professionals, had taken place on a regular basis and that staff from the service had attended school and, where appropriate, social work reviews. We felt that this collaborative approach further ensured positive outcomes for children and young people who had attended the service.

We noted that the team had made good use of the health and social care standards as a basis for reflective discussion at team meetings; individual members of staff had contributed examples of the way in which they had applied the standards. We felt that this had promoted peer learning and would further serve to ensure positive outcomes for the children and young people in relation to care planning.

While all staff had completed documentation in the child's care plan and daily logs in a detailed manner, we felt that further improvements could be made in respect of achieving greater consistency in the style and reflective content of records. We discussed this with the external manager and senior staff within the service who acknowledged the potential for improvement in this area. We look forward to seeing progress in this at the next inspection.

At the last inspection it was suggested that managers put in to place opportunities for those in senior positions within the team to progress to leadership roles. At this inspection we were pleased to note that this had been progressed with staff having been given additional or delegated responsibilities for which there is recognised training and certification.

We assessed this quality indicator as very good.

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 wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	5 - Very Good

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