

# Closeburn Centre Care Home Service

Closeburn  
Thornhill  
DG3 5HP

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Unannounced

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High Trees Ltd

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## About the service

Closeburn is registered as a care home service for children and young people. It is situated on the outskirts of Dumfries and is located within a large older styled building with modern extensions and set in extensive grounds.

The service has been registered since 2002. It is an independent resource that provides care to a maximum of 11 young people who require, for a variety of reasons, to be looked after and accommodated away from home. Referrals are made from local authorities throughout the UK.

The Closeburn Centre service has changed ownership since the last inspection with the new Provider now 'Outcomes First Group'. However the management and many staff members remain as before.

Within the building the provider also operate a small school which offering education for day pupils and for the young people who live at Closeburn Centre. The attached school is regulated by Education Scotland. At the time of inspection there were six young people living in the service, four of whom had been placed from Local Authorities from outwith Scotland.

## What people told us

We spoke with six young people individually and also when together following the evening meal. Young people were overall positive about living in Closeburn told us about having good relationships with staff member whom they trusted and who provided support, comfort and good advice. One young person had been unhappy at living so far from home but could separate this from the care experienced.

Young people were enthusiastic about opportunities for activities and gave many examples of fun times had with staff and peers. The house rules were regarded by most as fair however a minority considered there was unreasonable restrictions given their age and stage. Overall young people spoke very favourably about the adults caring for them although two young people told us sometimes, they were unhappy if staff raised their voice or appeared moody but were quick to highlight this was a very few.

Food was spoken about very positively with only a minor complaint made relating to a particular preference. All confirmed helping in the selection and preparation of the meals.

The majority of young people spoke highly about school and their achievements. A couple of young people told us they became annoyed when peers disrupted learning time in class.

Young people confirmed involvement in their care planning and that they had access to independent advocacy. Most young people told us they were happy living in Closeburn and all told us they felt safe and cared for. Three young people were extremely positive about the physical living environment, in particular the opportunities to have their room decorated and furnished to their own (high) standards and taste. The other young person really valued access to the outdoors and was proud of creating and maintaining areas of the garden.

**How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?**

**4 - Good**

We met with all the young people living in Closeburn who told us they had staff members whom they liked and trusted. We found young people to be relaxed and happy in the company of the staff and observed warm interactions. Staff spoke with warmth, hope and respect about the young people acknowledging their individual strengths and preferences. Staff had been working on reflecting on their use of language in order to promote respect, empathy and compassion.

The commitment shown to young people during the Covid Pandemic was exceptional with some staff going 'over and above' by working extra-long hours and days and staying over to lessen the 'footfall' and reduce the risk of Covid 19 entering the house.

When young people had expressed dissatisfaction with individual staff members this had been rigorously investigated. We were impressed at the way young people were listened and responded too and kept abreast of how their matters of concern were being taken forward. Resolutions reached reflected inclusive and transparent practices which was both sensitive and respectful.

Young people were routinely consulted and engaged about decisions involving day-to-day life such as activities, decoration, and house rules. Young people were also encouraged to support and respect each other and work towards resolving conflict. This ethos was reflected in the harmonious relationships between young people who told us they get on well albeit sometimes "bicker" but they quickly "get over it".

Independent advocacy was promoted with good links with the local advocacy services and independent advocates from young people's home areas. The local independent advocate told us she was made welcome into Closeburn and was a regular visitor. We were told of Closeburn's pro-active approach to advocacy and the partnership working in resolving issues raised by young people.

The staff team understood that young people could often have difficulty expressing emotions and supported communication in a variety of ways. These had included, use of emotions lanyards, use of diaries and social stories. A major strength was in the recognition of particular bonds young people had with specific members of staff and the individual time given for these relationships to flourish.

Young people were thriving from the daily routines which brought structure and stability within a nurturing setting. One young person told us of how dramatically her sleep had improved and how this had enabled to make more of her day as she was no longer "tired and moody". Another young person told us about being less angry and more able to talk issues through.

All young people were doing well in school and most told us they liked it. Attendance was excellent despite some young people, prior to living in Closeburn, having considerable periods of interrupted learning. Further opportunities were made available, such as access to further education colleges and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Outwith school there was a great range of activities and opportunities for young people to have fun, pursue interests and take up new hobbies. One young person had succeeded in climbing Munros, another set to take to the stage in a local drama group production and others developing skills in horse-riding. Trips to the swimming, cinema and shopping were routine pastimes.

Closeburn had worked hard to be contributing members of their local community. Their acceptance by this small community was demonstrated at Christmas when young people were given gifts and also included in Halloween events.

A young person was volunteering in the local gardening group. The service was part of, and hosted, meetings with the local planning group organising the heritage event marking the 300-year anniversary of the former Wallacewell Academy (which was partly sited in the Closeburn Centre).

The staff and management were highly motivated to ensure young people would not be disadvantaged because they were living away from home. Special occasions were acknowledged and celebrated. Examples of this included Christmas eve boxes with new pyjamas and goodies, celebrating a year living in Closeburn, hiring a limousine and a party to mark the end of school term and young people having professional 'Hollywood' style portrait photographs taken.

Young people told us how they were helped to keep in touch with their family and friends despite the distance from their home community. This included meeting family halfway between Closeburn and their home area, using skype and organising holiday accommodation nearby. We considered this was a strength of the service demonstrating a clear commitment to preserving the identity and family relationships of the young people in their care.

Risk was managed well, and we could see how young people developed new ways of coping with difficult and painful emotions and memories. Restrictions based on safety concerns, such as, constant staff supervision or no access to the internet, were reviewed and relaxed as appropriate. However, it was not always clearly stated what was required of the young person in order for restrictions to be removed. We considered this could be alarming for young people particularly when newly arrived at Closeburn. We were told this would be addressed.

Staff were aware of the risks of child sexual exploitation and how to identify general child protection concerns. Tools and open discussions were helping young people recognise their own vulnerability, build skills and resilience.

Physical restraint was seldom used and considered as a last resort with relational approaches succeeding in helping most young people in crisis. Most young people were being helped explore trauma and loss. There were significant and trusting relationships between some young people and their keyworkers. However, we did not consider the use of monetary deductions, to compensate for damage to furniture and fittings, reflected a trauma informed understanding or approach. We ask that this practice be reviewed. We were aware a minority of young people perceived staff members as raising their voice when they disapproved of behaviour. We were aware staff were looking at both verbal and body language. We have asked that the team refresh or embark on learning on trauma informed approaches to care. (Area for improvement 1)

There were well established links to primary health services with the health care needs of young people addressed promptly. The impact caused by the pandemic on accessing some services, such as the dentist was now an improving situation.

Closeburn management continued to notify to the host Local Authority of Dumfries and Galloway Council when a new young person come to live in the house and we considered this important.

Some young people were being supported by the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health team (CAMHS) based in Dumfries and when young people were referred these requests were met promptly. We were offered assurances from Closeburn management that, prior to admitting a young person, it would be established whether specialist services would be required and, if so, liaise with these services as necessary.

The support to the young people during this pandemic was extremely well planned and sensitivity handled. The child centred literature explained about Covid 19, the illness, how best to keep safe, the impact of

restrictions and the importance of vaccination, all of which kept young informed and would have offered reassurance.

Physical activity was promoted, and we found young people were leading active lifestyles with encouragement to eat well. Mealtimes were a social occasion with much chat and laughter with young people helping in the planning and preparations of meals. There are plans to further improve the mealtime experience by creating a new homelier kitchen and dining area within the house.

There was very good transitions to help new young people prepare for coming to live in Closeburn. For some this had included visits beforehand. When this had not been possible (due to Covid 19 restrictions) a 'remote' look around was provided, meeting with staff and young people online. Young people were encouraged to mentor other new young people. This was promoting kindness and empathy and helping to forge relationships from the start of the young person's stay.

Medication was appropriately stored and administered as prescribed. We found that medication was being used to help young people and was reviewed routinely. We did ask that consideration be given to young people to managing their own medication, if they were able, and as part of preparing for adulthood.

### Areas for improvement

1. The withdrawal of pocket money to pay for damages should be reviewed with all staff trained, skilled and equipped with a range of credible therapeutic approaches to support young people in crisis.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

### 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**

There was a particularly good level of engagement with young people in care planning. Young people were supported in attending formal care reviews of their care. Most were clear about future plans and how this

was being progressed. Some young people were actively involved in setting out monthly goals using the Getting It Right for Every Child wellbeing web as the structure with the support of keyworker team members. We did suggest ways that this could be progressed for older young people who may find the use of smiley faces too simplistic.

We did suggest that the care plan completed by the staff could be better linked to the goals identified by young people and could be more specific and targeted. However we could see improved outcomes for young people, such as, building social skills and confidence and making safer choices.

Within the personal files we examined we found that legal orders and individual placement agreements were held and the overall care plan as stipulated by the placing Local Authority. Care reviews were being held within statutory timescales. Social workers told us that the communication with the team at Closeburn was very good and they had been impressed at the progress being made by young people in achieving the goals identified in the care plans.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	4 - 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	4 - Good
How well is our care 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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