

Our specialist education and residential care services in Scotland



Introducing Radio City School

Rated 'Good' by Education Scotland, Radio City School in Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, is an independent, specialist school providing education services to children and young people aged 8 to 18 years with a wide range of complex needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), learning disabilities, child sexual exploitation (CSE), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and other behaviours that may challenge. Our young people have often had negative experiences in school with substantial gaps in their education.

Pupils attending Radio City School can also live at one of our associated children's homes, located close to the school and within the beautiful Ayrshire countryside.

Unlocking the potential of each young person we support

Our aim at Radio City School is to unlock the potential of our students so they develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to enjoy a brighter future.

We offer a warm and nurturing environment, where pupils receive the support they need to develop emotionally and socially, and prepare to learn again. Our highly experienced and dedicated staff team make learning feel worthwhile and enjoyable for our young people. They build positive and meaningful connections so that pupils feel secure, understood and valued, with a sense of belonging to our school and the wider community.

A personalised learning environment

The young people at Radio City School are at the heart of everything we do and staff members are focused on their unique individual needs. We are committed to delivering individually tailored educational support, which is shaped by our students' individual strengths, needs, preferences and life goals. Our aim is to enable our students to develop and progress socially, emotionally and academically, all within a caring and highly supportive environment.

We have ambitious expectations for our students in all aspects of school life. We are dedicated to guiding them every step of the way along their personalised learning journey, and supporting them to feel positive and hopeful about their future. With our specialist support, the young people in our care are empowered to build the social and independence skills they need to make positive transitions to further learning or employment.

Consistent wraparound education, care and support

With a number of children's homes associated with Radio City School, young people benefit from the same consistent approach across residential care and education, which extends the positive impact of our support. The school staff team work closely with residential care staff to provide integrated care that gives each child the best possible chance to succeed.

To maintain consistency and continuity for young people who need this support, we offer learning experiences throughout the school holidays, which are shaped by what young people tell us they need.

Providing enriching outdoor learning experiences

We offer extensive opportunities to learn outdoors, with young people benefiting from rewarding and enriching activities, including horse riding, water sports, cycling and hiking, and we are a registered Duke of Edinburgh's Award site. These activities all build confidence and self-esteem, whilst developing skills for life, such as teamwork and communication.

A commitment to safety and welfare

I am very proud of our school and the inspiring achievements of our young people. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to arrange a visit to see Radio City School for yourself.

Louise Coleman
Head Teacher at Radio City School



"I've got a lot to thank the staff for. If my daughter hadn't gone into care and received the support she's got, she wouldn't be here right now. She's flourishing, she's happy and it's just absolutely amazing. All of the family can see the difference in her."

Parent of a pupil at Radio City School



Part of one of the UK's leading specialist education providers

We are proud to be part of Aspris Children's Services, one of the UK's leading specialist education providers. We form part of a network of schools and colleges sharing best practice and learnings from each other's successes.

As part of Aspris Children's Services, we have access to a national network of education and care services. We also benefit from a comprehensive and continually updated range of training, expert information and advice for educating and supporting children and young people. This supports weekly continuing professional development (CPD) sessions and an annual conference with other associated schools for our staff, who are continually learning how to most effectively meet the needs of our students.

Our school is overseen by an Operations Director, Health and Safety Advisor and Quality Lead, ensuring a consistent and robust approach of the highest standards.

Our residential care services

Our specialist children's homes are situated within the beautiful Ayrshire countryside and offer high-quality care in safe and nurturing environments. We take full account of national standards and quality indicators. This is further emphasised by seven of our children's homes graded as '5 - Very Good' rating during their latest inspection from the Care Inspectorate.



Introducing our Head of Care

I have previously held the position of Head of Care and Operations Manager for two large independent childcare providers.

My career in supporting people started over 30 years ago, initially working with both the English and Scottish Prison Services, where I was successful in obtaining a postgraduate diploma in Alcohol and Drug Studies, and was a facilitator for Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland (COSCA).

In 2008, working alongside the police, I was the Lead Counsellor for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in a major child abuse enquiry in Jersey. I have also worked for both statutory and private providers, using my skills in assisting both young people and adults. I am a qualified Clinical Hypnotherapist and have been a Practice Teacher for Paisley University.

I am proud to be working with such a passionate and caring staff team, and have every confidence that any child or young person placed with us will receive specialist care, unparalleled anywhere else in the UK.



Raymond Alexander
Regional Manager

Our current Care Inspectorate gradings

We are really proud of the quality and services provided to the young people that we support. Please find below the current gradings for each of our children's homes.



Children's home	Inspection grade
Balgray Cottage	5 - Very Good
Clonmacate	5 - Very Good
Croekwood	4 - Good
Dovecote Hall Cottage	5 - Very Good
Gatehouse/Brownhill Cottage	5 - Very Good
Rose Cottage	5 - Very Good
Waterside	5 - Very Good
Woodend Farm	5 - Very Good

Balgray Cottage

The picturesque Balgray Cottage is located on the outskirts of a village in the Garnock Valley area of North Ayrshire. The children's home provides modern and spacious accommodation for five residents aged 8 to 18 years. The range of communal spaces available for the young people to enjoy includes two large lounges, a dining room, kitchen and well-maintained gardens, with an outhouse.



"Moving to Balgray was the best thing that's happened to him."

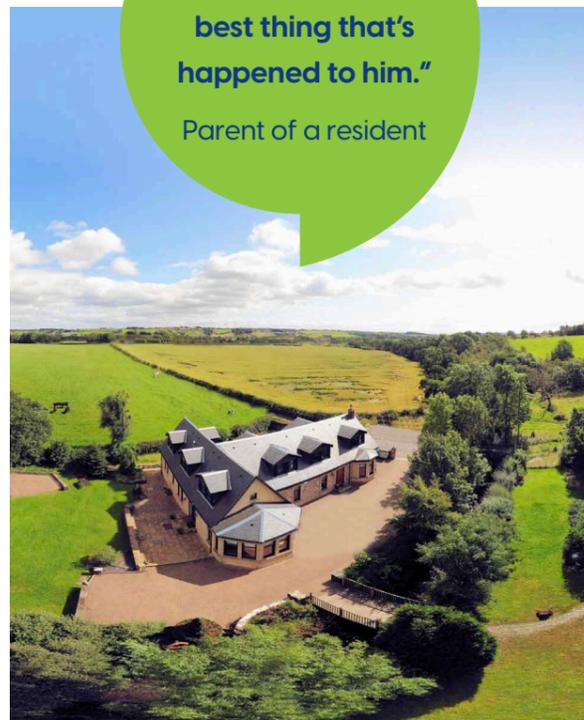
Parent of a resident

Supporting the needs of the young people

Psychological and assessment co-ordination services have a special prominence at Balgray Cottage. We support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The staff ratios at Balgray Cottage reflect the needs of the young people; we can offer 1:1 and 2:1 support, as well as a 24-hour waking service. The service also has the capacity to facilitate specialist multi-agency work, including family work and therapeutic input, in keeping with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Young people supported at Balgray Cottage have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

Balgray Cottage offers residents opportunity to participate in a wide range of creative workshops. These are conducted by a team of therapeutic counsellors, to building self-confidence and resilience. In addition, the team at Balgray Cottage offer relationship counselling through a person-centred model.

All of our staff team operate according to our mission statement and values, and are skilled in delivering healing and therapeutic techniques. These include restorative approaches, crisis counselling, addressing issues of attachment and building resilience.



A range of activities

The extensive grounds and outbuildings allow for a host of flexible approaches to be undertaken in supporting children and young people to gain a better understanding of their true potential.

Activities in the local area include:

- Water sports at Castle Semple
- Beach walks and ferry trips to Millport and Arran
- Camping and barbeques
- Bike rides around the local cycle paths
- Extensive grounds surrounding Balgray Cottage where otters, deer and other wildlife can be found
- Horse riding activities
- Historical visits to Burns Cottage and Culzean Castle
- Swimming, trampoline and dry slope skiing
- Scouts clubs
- Boxing club in Glengarnock
- Cycling in Millport
- Football clubs in Largs
- Music and singing groups or individual tuition in Stevenston Youth Hub

"We observed warm, loving and fun interactions between staff and young people and young people and social workers told us about the important relationships the staff built with the young people."

Care Inspectorate

"Children and young people were kept safe by confident, knowledgeable, and well-trained staff. One young person said that Balgray Cottage was 'a home away from home'."

Care Inspectorate



Brownhill Cottage

Located in a quiet and rural environment within South Ayrshire, Brownhill Cottage offers a single placement. The children's home supports one child or young person aged 8 to 18 years with complex needs, who presents as high risk, is exceptionally vulnerable, and is in need of greater protection.

The range of communal spaces available for the young person to enjoy includes a large lounge, kitchen and well-maintained gardens.



Supporting the needs of the young people

The young person at Brownhill Cottage generally has difficulties sustaining relationships and finds living in a group setting problematic. The resident may require trauma-related support and wellbeing intervention approaches, in keeping with the robust risk-management programmes. The environment, routines and strategies reflect what works best for the individual young person.

The staff ratios reflect the needs of the young person and 2:1 support is in place across the 24-hour waking service. Young people supported at Brownhill Cottage have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

Our team at Brownhill Cottage have a very strong reputation in supporting individuals with complex additional support needs. 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) is central to all of the work that we do and we place importance on having clear roles and responsibilities for the young person and worker, to establish a safe and therapeutic environment. Transitions from previous placements are carefully planned and staff listen to the voice of the young person. They also ensure that all other transitions are carefully discussed and planned.

"I really enjoy living here."

Resident at
Brownhill Cottage

"Young people were fully committed to engaging with their education and were supported to this by staff."

Care Inspectorate

"The staff were engaging the young person in their care plan and assuring them of their commitment to progressing their wellbeing."

Care Inspectorate

A range of activities

Brownhill Cottage benefits from being only a short drive to several nearby towns. These locations offer a wide range of amenities and activities for a child or young person. This includes:

- The Palace Centre
- Dean Castle Country Park
- Centre Stage Dance & Music Studio
- The Dick Institute – a museum, gallery and library
- The Music Box
- Go-karting and ten pin bowling
- The Ayrshire Athletics Arena
- Annanhill and Caprington Golf Courses
- Local beaches



Clonmacate

Clonmacate is set in a semi-rural location in South Ayrshire. The service benefits from a picturesque backdrop of green fields and nature, with panoramic views of nearby towns and beaches.

Clonmacate offers a nurturing environment to children and young people from the ages of 8 to 18 years. The spacious home consists of five bedrooms, four of which are en-suite, two lounges, an open plan kitchen-diner and a large decking area, with beautiful scenic views.



Supporting the needs of the young people

At Clonmacate, we support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Young people who have experienced failed attachment, will find sanctuary and healing within this warm and impressively furnished setting. The therapeutic surroundings close to Clonmacate, such as beaches and hill walks, also offer an engaging learning and living environment.

Clonmacate's vision is to provide a family environment, with routines and strategies in line with what works best for the children and young people. The staff ratios also reflect the needs of the young people, offering various levels of support and a 24-hour waking service.

Young people supported at Clonmacate have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

Our staff team at Clonmacate place a strong emphasis on engaging with the children and young people, and having them identify their living situation as no ordinary care setting. We focus on possibilities rather than limitations, in order to foster empowerment and achieve positive outcomes.

A range of activities

Clonmacate is close to the town centre and approximately a 10-minute drive to nearby beach towns. With good travel links including trains and buses, this allows for independent travelling, if the young person's care plan allows them to do so.

Clonmacate is in close proximity to a college, which can provide further learning opportunities to young people of school leaver age.

The accessibility to the local community offers considerable opportunities for social and peer engagement, and also educational and vocational opportunities. This supports children and young people with their choice of activities and hobbies.

Other activities in the local area include:

- A museum
- Arts and crafts centres
- Cinema
- Craig Tara Holiday Park
- A farm park
- Local beaches and park
- Local horse riding centres

"Staff had successfully built positive relationships with the children and young people. These relationships had been maintained through significant periods of support to young people within the service."

Care Inspectorate

"Young people described feeling listened to with regard to their own personal preferences and with regard to their own living spaces and rooms. Young people also confirmed they felt respected by staff."

Care Inspectorate

Croekwood

Croekwood is set in a rural location on the outskirts of a village in North Ayrshire, offering a nurturing environment to children and young people aged 8 to 18 years. Croekwood is a spacious house with five bedrooms, two large lounges and a kitchen/dining room. The location also boasts a picturesque backdrop of green fields and nature.

Walks in the countryside are on our doorstep and the surrounding fields have horses, alpacas and Highland cows.



Supporting the needs of the young people

At Croekwood, we support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Young people who have experienced failed attachment will find sanctuary and healing within this warm and modern furnished setting. The therapeutic surroundings at Croekwood also offer an engaging learning and living environment for children and young people.

The family environment, routines and strategies are in line with what works best for the children and young people. The staff ratios reflect the needs of the young people, offering various levels of support and a 24-hour waking service.

Young people supported at Croekwood have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.

Providing best practice

Our staff team at Croekwood place a strong emphasis on engaging with the children and young people, and having them identify their living situation as no ordinary care setting. We focus on possibilities rather than limitations, in order to foster empowerment for our children and young people.

“Young people that spoke with us gave very positive views of the staff group and stated how they trusted staff and knew they could turn to them for advice, guidance and support.”

Care Inspectorate

“The service had provided chickens for the young people to care for and this was proving to be an area of interest for the majority of the young people.”... “Young people were taking an active interest in the wellbeing of these animals and this promoted nurturing and empathetic approaches from young people.”

Care Inspectorate



A range of activities

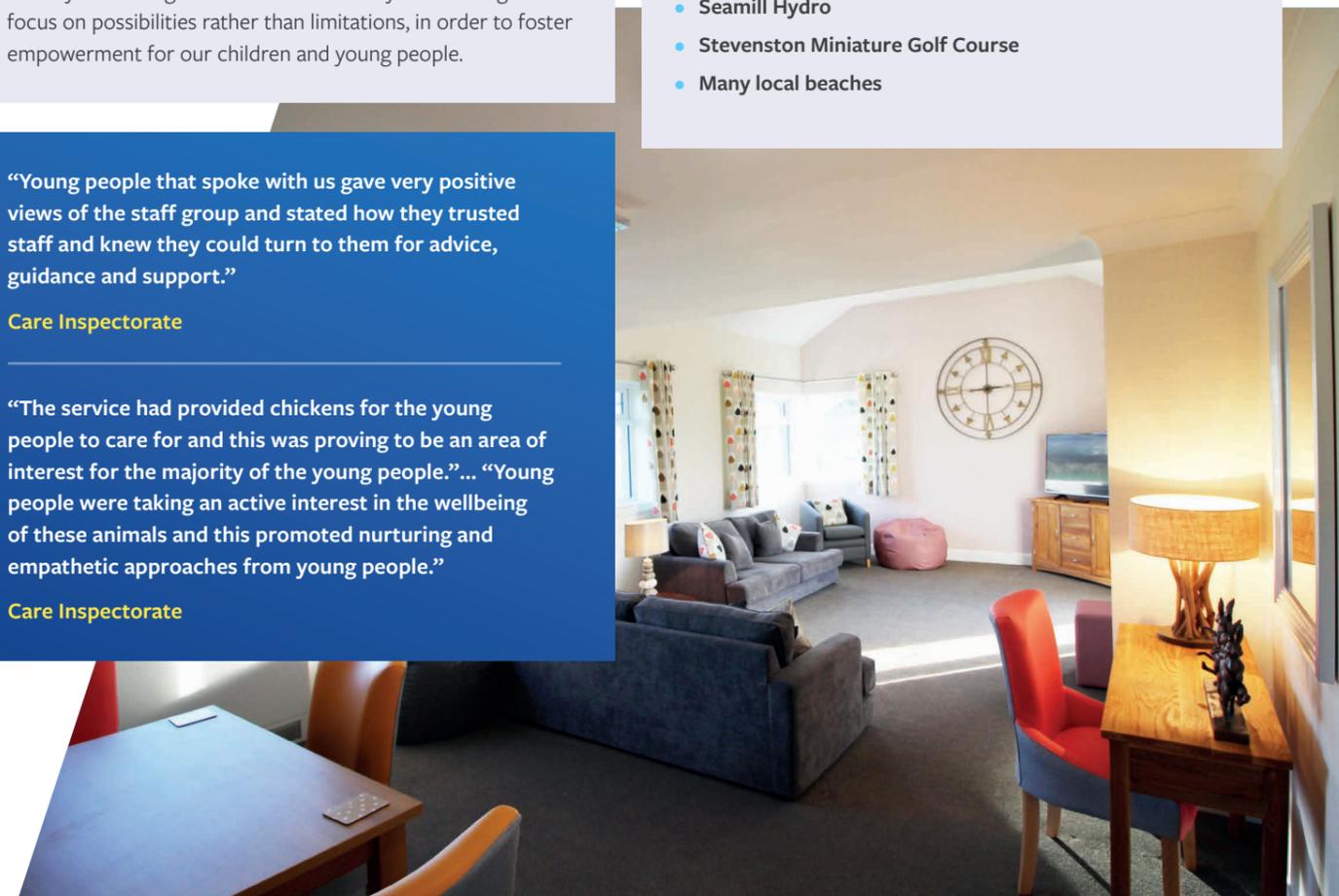
The spacious grounds at Croekwood offer considerable opportunities for social and peer engagement, with vast space to support the children and young people with their choice of activities and hobbies. There is a plan to have flower beds and a fruit and vegetable garden on-site, promoting both individual and group activities, that will contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes.

There are links with a local stable so children and young people who have an interest in horses can attend. Croekwood also has space to have their own farm animals, which will be developed through participation from the children and young people living there.

The nearby village is a five-minute drive away and is known as Scotland's first craft town, where there is a variety of studios and galleries showcasing local artists' work.

Activities in the local area include:

- Vikingar! Largs
- North Ayrshire Heritage Centre
- Water sports at Castle Semple
- Portencross Hamlet and Beach
- Seamill Hydro
- Stevenston Miniature Golf Course
- Many local beaches



Dovecote Hall Cottage

Located on the outskirts of a large town in North Ayrshire, Dovecote Hall Cottage is a charming former toll house, situated within semi-rural agricultural land. The service offers comfortable and scenic accommodation, including an annexe for more independent living. The main house is an ideal setting for a solo placement or sibling group aged 8 to 18 years with a range of needs.



Supporting the needs of the young people

At Dovecote Hall Cottage, we support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The staff ratios reflect the needs of the young people, with the service offering 1:1 and 2:1 support, and includes a 24-hour waking service. Where required, we can also provide supported living to individuals via our satellite flat, as part of pathways planning.

Young people supported at Dovecote Hall Cottage have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

We promote the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and staff. GIRFEC is at the core of our work. There is an emphasis on the clear roles and responsibilities of the child, young person and staff worker, to establish a safe and therapeutic environment.

Embedded within our work at Dovecote Hall Cottage, is a commitment to an 'outcomes' approach in meeting needs. Central to this are our approaches to assessment, which are the cornerstones of our work. We are committed to our 'one team' ethos and promote safety, wellbeing and opportunity for our children, young people and staff.



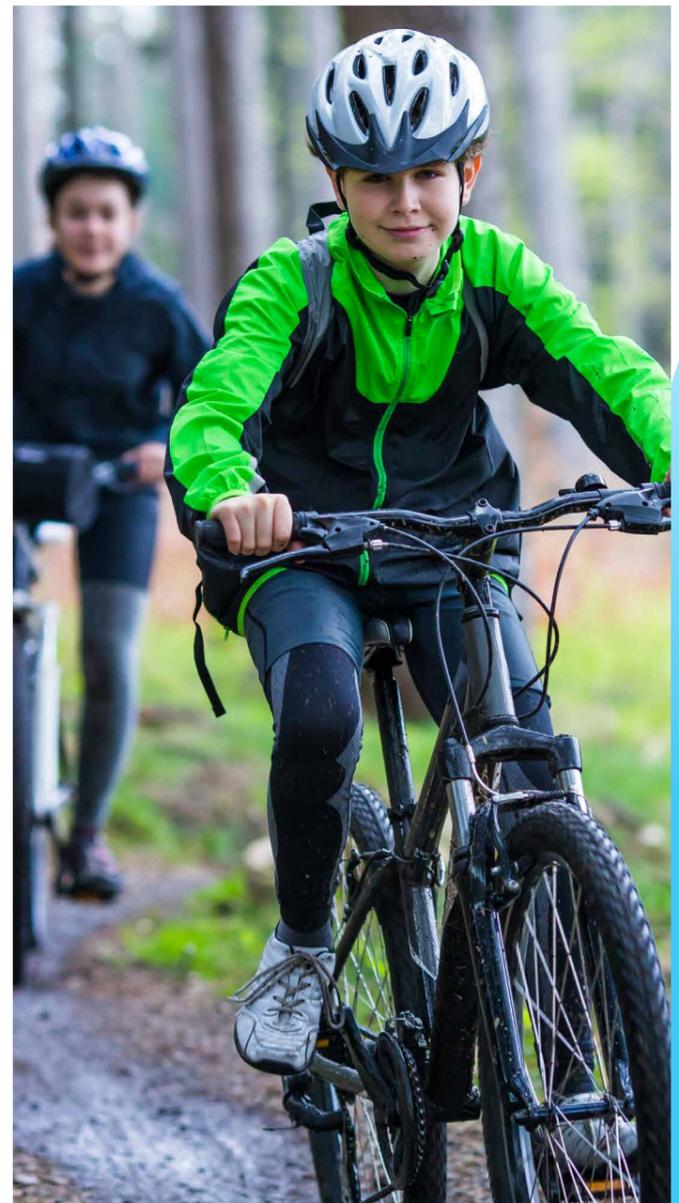
A range of activities

The external environment at Dovecote Hall Cottage is utilised to maximise opportunities for early interventions, which can assist residents in leading rich and fulfilling lives. The staff team provide a structure that ensures young people undertake normal daily routines and are encouraged to become as independent as possible, in terms of sleep patterns, personal hygiene, dressing, attending school, cooking and shopping.

The external environment provides a range of learning opportunities and staff have gained recognition for their inclusive approach.

Local activities include:

- A snooker club
- Greenacres Riding Stables
- Magnum Centre with swimming, badminton, short tennis and fitness facilities
- Army Cadets
- Galleon Leisure Centre with 5-a-side football, badminton, a sauna, swimming, ice skating and ice hockey
- Dean Castle & Country Park
- The Garage Leisure Complex



“Social Workers and parents to the young people confirmed that the young people had made significant progress during their time in Dovecote. They commented on the additional effort that staff had made to ensure they understood the young people’s needs.”

Care Inspectorate

“Young people told us of the positive relationships they have with staff and we observed good natured and engaging interaction between the young people and staff.”

Care Inspectorate

Gatehouse

Located in a semi-rural location within a village in East Ayrshire, Gatehouse provides a therapeutic, family environment for five children and young people aged between 8 to 18 years. The service offers enhanced support and tailored therapy, with identified assessed needs for individuals who have presented as high risk, exceptionally vulnerable or in need of greater protection.

The children's home has a range of spacious communal areas and a large garden to the rear of the property, with an allotment area.

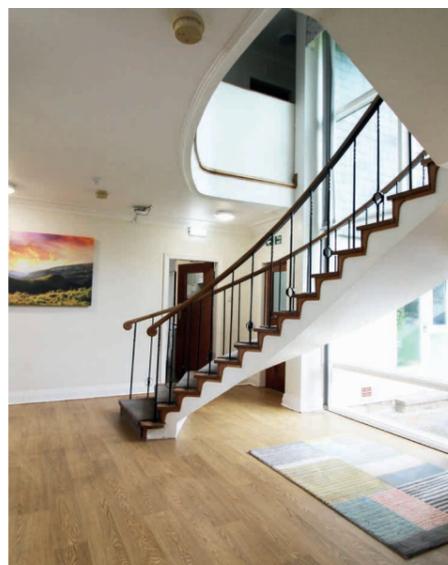


Supporting the needs of the young people

At Gatehouse, we support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

We promote an ethos of safety and wellbeing for all children, young people and staff. The principles of GIRFEC are at the core of the work used to promote boundaries and safe care, used to establish a safe and secure environment. Within a 24-hour waking service, the availability of 1:1 and 2:1 support is viewed as crucial to supporting the previous work of other professionals and in securing positive transitions.

Young people supported at Gatehouse have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

Our team at Gatehouse has a wide range of experience and expertise in working with individuals, who require enhanced support.

Staff are mindful of the backgrounds of each young person and effectively use nurturing approaches to create a truly calm and supportive ethos. Transitions from previous placements are carefully planned with full credence given to the voice of the young person. Our team are experienced and skilled in delivering specific interventions, including restorative approaches, support for substance misuse and trauma counselling.

A mentoring service for each individual is available, which is driven by a focus on challenge and opportunity in the pursuit of lasting social change. As appropriate and in keeping with the child's plan, staff work in a robust manner to provide lasting change through preventative and early interventions, continuity of care and multi-agency work.



A range of activities

Gatehouse provides privacy and safety, and its grounds allow for a range of activities, including both leisure and structured engagement. The designated horticultural area, along with access to the nearby river and farmland, allows for therapeutic input via animal husbandry and work experience. Situated just a five-minute drive away from a large town, young people have access to a wide range of engaging activities and social outings. These include:

- Galleon Sports Centre
- Odeon Cinema
- Rugby Park – home to Kilmarnock FC
- Centre Stage Dance & Music Studio
- The Dick Institute – a museum, gallery and library
- Army Cadet Force
- Dean Castle Country Park
- Ten pin bowling
- Go-karting



“Young people were shown respect by the staff and manager.”

Care Inspectorate

“A detailed and well considered approach was taken to supporting the young person to maintain connections to family members and people important to them.”

Care Inspectorate

Rose Cottage

Rose Cottage benefits from an idyllic setting, within the heart of a town in North Ayrshire. The children's home supports five children and young people aged 8 to 18 years, and has been specifically designed to provide a family environment for all who live and work there.

The range of communal spaces available for the young people to enjoy, includes a large lounge, diner-kitchen and a well-maintained garden.



Supporting the needs of the young people

The spacious interior across two levels at Rose Cottage has helped facilitate the integration of a range of different needs. This includes trauma and adverse childhood experiences, an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The routines and available support at Rose Cottage have been designed to provide a family environment, but also ensure flexibility for new admissions or for young people transitioning back home. Rose Cottage has been furnished to the highest standard and has rooms specifically allocated for innovative interventions. The staff ratios reflect the needs of the young people, and can offer 1:1 and 2:1 support, and a 24-hour waking service.

Young people supported at Rose Cottage have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

The team at Rose Cottage take advantage of the various amenities connecting the children's home to the local community. The young people can enjoy one-to-one and group support, as they access public transport, the local shops and community groups and clubs. As well as using the positive environment of the town, our educare team are mindful of the backgrounds of each young person, and effectively use nurturing approaches and engage the young people in therapeutic programmes, with a particular emphasis on resilience and attachment.

“Young people were thriving in Rose Cottage, and this was due to the consistency of the knowledgeable and compassionate staff team that were well supported by the managers in the service.”

Care Inspectorate

“There was a real sense that staff were committed to taking a relationship-based approach and looked for different ways to connect with the young people.”

Care Inspectorate

“Children and young people enjoyed warm, trusting, and nurturing relationships with those caring for them.”

Care Inspectorate



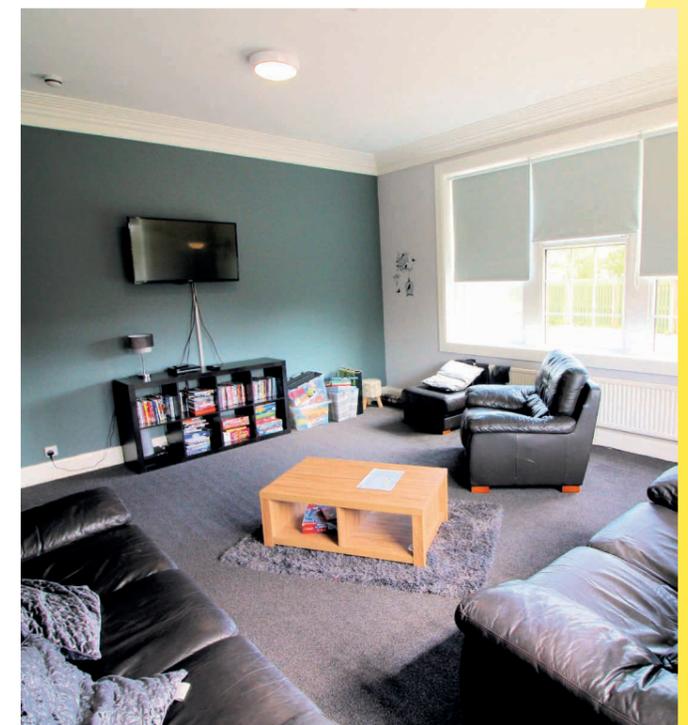
A range of activities

Our team at Rose Cottage promote independence for residents to take full advantage of the community setting. The degree of autonomy afforded to residents depends on each individual's level of need, and can start with managing personal hygiene, sleep patterns, dressing, attending school, cooking meals with our housekeeper and shopping either independently or with staff.

All of the facilities and activities in the local area are open to Rose Cottage residents. These include:

- A snooker club
- Magnum Centre with swimming, badminton, short tennis and fitness facilities
- ‘Clubbercise’ at Vineburgh Boxing Club
- Football club at Greenwood Academy
- Local beach walks
- The HUB – local youth club

As well as these local amenities, all residents have complimentary access to facilities at our other local Aspris Children's Services homes. This includes, horse riding and caring for animals at our Balgray Cottage and Woodend Farm children's homes.



Waterside

Situated within a town in North Ayrshire, Waterside has two living arrangements available consisting of five bedrooms in the main house and a single service on the premises for children and young people aged 8 to 18 years. The service has a range of communal areas and benefits from a large garden, with stables and a chicken coop.

Waterside continues the farm living approach that has been so successful in meeting the needs of the young people at our Woodend Farm children's home, whilst also placing a particular emphasis on engaging with trauma of failed attachment.



Supporting the needs of the young people

At Waterside, we support children and young people with trauma and adverse childhood experiences, as well as additional support needs. This includes an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Young people suffering from failed attachment will find sanctuary and healing within this warm and impressively furnished setting. The therapies available at Waterside also offer an engaging learning and living environment for children and young people. Individuals experiencing issues of anxiety and trauma, as well as resulting social and emotional behaviours, may benefit from the independent living setting available, which also allows for structured peer engagement on the grounds.

The family environment, routines and strategies are in line with what works best for individual young people. The staff ratios also reflect the needs of the young people, offering 1:1 and 2:1 support, and a 24-hour waking service.

Young people supported at Waterside have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.



Providing best practice

Our team at Waterside place a strong emphasis on engaging with children and young people, and having them identify their living situation as no ordinary care setting. What sets our practice at the farm apart is the focus on possibilities rather than limitations, in order to foster empowerment.

A core practice at Waterside is role modelling, to encourage positive interactions in tackling issues, resilience and social engagement. Our team are skilled and experienced in providing positive transitions for young people from previous placements, through careful and inclusive planning.



A range of activities

The spacious grounds at Waterside offer considerable opportunities for social and peer engagement and the chicken coop, stables and fishing pond on-site, promotes both individual and group activities that will contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes.

Activities in the area include:

- Swimming, trampolining and dry slope skiing
- Camping and BBQs
- Water sports at Castle Semple
- Heads of Ayr Farm Park
- Kilwinning Sports Club
- Laserquest, bowling and go-karting
- Bike rides around the local cycle paths
- Whitelee Windfarms

Achieving positive outcomes

Young people who have resided at Waterside have successfully enjoyed long term placements, where they have faced their significant social and emotional barriers to group integration.



“Young people’s individual ambitions were being nurtured and supported. Activities that young people were interested in were sought and new experiences identified for young people. This encouraged young people to further develop their individual identities whilst also having fun.”

Care Inspectorate

Woodend Farm

Woodend Farm is located in a rural setting in South Ayrshire. The children's home offers a unique farm life experience that allows residents to sample a wider caring environment. This is achieved through active participation in delivering care to farm animals and promoting positive engagement in therapeutic work.

Woodend Farm provides first class living quarters for five children and young people aged 8 to 18 years. The service provides three en-suite bathrooms, two lounges, a diner-kitchen, and panoramic surrounding of green fields and trees.



Supporting the needs of the young people

Young people with a range of needs benefit greatly from the therapeutic nature of the farm. This includes trauma and adverse childhood experiences, an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), pathological demand avoidance (PDA), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and child sexual exploitation (CSE). All of the young people at the children's home present as high risk, are exceptionally vulnerable and are in need of the greater protection available at this service.

The family environment, routines and strategies are in line with what works best for the young people. The staff ratios reflect the needs of the young people, offering 1:1 and 2:1 support, and a 24-hour waking service.

Young people supported at Woodend Farm have access to specialist education services provided by Radio City School, which is part of Aspris Children's Services. We also have strong links with other local mainstream and specialist external education provisions.

Providing best practice

Woodend Farm places a strong emphasis on engaging with children and young people, and enabling them to identify their living situation as no ordinary care setting.

A core practice at Woodend Farm is role modelling, to encourage positive interactions in tackling issues, resilience and social engagement. Our team are skilled and experienced in providing positive transitions for young people from previous placements, through careful and inclusive planning.



“Children and young people enjoyed warm, trusting, and nurturing relationships with those caring for them. The staff were compassionate, had an understanding of trauma and were motivated to spend time having fun with the young people.”

Care Inspectorate

“The young people consistently told us that they felt safe and we saw positive examples of staff responding to young people's changing needs and pro-actively working with other agencies to support them.”

Resident at Waterside



A range of activities

It is hoped that fuller social integration for children and young people can be supported through a combination of active farm living and participation in wider social activities and interests. The children and young people will benefit from access to hill walking and the nearby woodland, as well as hands-on opportunities to support the animal husbandry that they witness daily.

The achievements on the farm are used as opportunities to celebrate the contribution of everyone who works and lives there. In addition, young people are able to access a wide range of community activities in the local area. These include:

- Davis and Pyramid Snooker Club
- Citadel Centre with swimming/gym
- Local football clubs
- Beach Park
- Heads of Ayr Farm Park
- Culzean Castle
- Zumba and Clubbercise



Case studies



Daniel's story

At 10 years old, Daniel* spent six months in hospital before coming to live at Balgray Cottage. Daniel has now stayed with us for three years, with an agreed view that Daniel's placement will be long term.

Daniel had a diagnosis of depression, as well as significant eating difficulties, which had left him malnourished and underweight.

Daniel previously had limited engagement with education and struggled to attend. He also found it difficult to communicate with adults in his life. He would often try to hide under tables or squeeze himself into small spaces when he was upset, and this could be dangerous for him. Daniel would bark or growl at staff when angry, as he was unable to verbalise his emotions.

Daniel's key issues and needs included:

- Delayed communication
- Depression
- Emotional regulation
- Impulse control
- Relationship difficulties

When Daniel arrived at Balgray Cottage, he was on high doses of medication to control his depression. He struggled to take his medication and this could have an adverse impact on his behaviour. Daniel would become aggressive towards staff and put himself at risk by trying to hide in small, enclosed spaces.

Following these incidents, Daniel would lie in the foetal position or try to sit on a staff member's knee for reassurance and support. This led staff at Balgray Cottage to develop an approach with Daniel which involved him retracing early childhood developmental stages. This approach enabled Daniel to develop his internal coping strategies, whilst also encouraging him to build trusting relationships with staff.



Planned strategies

Planned strategies were used to support Daniel and enable him to overcome many of his difficulties. These included:

- Close contact and hugs
- A consistent staff team
- A tent for his bedroom which he identified as a 'safe space', giving him time alone
- Regular medication reviews at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Letting Daniel know that staff would support him when he was ready to communicate
- Regular key working sessions, which enabled Daniel to build trust with staff and begin open communication
- Time at the park after school to allow Daniel to burn off unused energy

Achieving positive outcomes

We are consistently seeing improvements in Daniel's behaviour as a result of the caring, specialist support of the staff team at Balgray Cottage.

During a CAMHS review, it was agreed that Daniel no longer needed the medication used to manage his depression. This was due to the coping strategies he was encouraged to develop and the support provided at the home.

For the first time, Daniel has been able to attend education regularly, and his attendance is consistently high with 100% school attendance. The number of incidents Daniel has been involved in has also significantly decreased year-on-year from 35 to 9.

Daniel's life is very different to when he joined Balgray Cottage. He has joined a local football club, and attends training and games. Daniel has also been able to build up levels of contact with his family and maintain relationships with his siblings.



Case studies



Sarah's story

Sarah* arrived at Waterside from a previous placement in England, which had broken down following a serious incident she was involved in. She had been charged with arson and endangerment of life. Sarah had been in care for a year before joining our home and had a number of placements.

Sarah had a history of being verbally and physically aggressive towards staff. She struggled to engage with her education, was frequently absconding, and was at risk due to misusing drugs and alcohol. There were also child sexual exploitation (CSE) concerns.

When she came to live at Waterside, Sarah told staff that she could end a placement within 12 weeks. She felt that there was no point in building relationships, as she did not stay anywhere long enough.

In her first months at the home, Sarah assaulted a member of staff and set fire to her bedroom curtains. The staff team at Waterside began to build a picture of the indicators that Sarah was struggling with to manage her behaviour, which included changes in her facial expressions and sleeping patterns, as well as a loss of appetite.

Sarah's key issues and needs included:

- **Mental health difficulties**
- **Impulse control**
- **Education attendance**
- **Risk-taking behaviours**
- **Drug and alcohol misuse**



Planned strategies

A range of strategies were put together to support Sarah during her time at Waterside. She was supported by two members of staff at all times, when out in the community and during education. When changes were noticed in her behaviour, staff would encourage Sarah to take time away from communal areas to regulate her emotions. She would be redirected to another activity, with staff encouraging Sarah to use the coping strategies they had devised together.

Sarah was referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to address the behaviours she presented, including anger issues and risk-taking. Sarah attended CAMHS weekly and this was subsequently reduced to fortnightly. Sarah was then discharged from the service. She completed an impulsivity programme with staff and met with the fire service to complete intervention work.

A therapeutic plan was created to support Sarah to build trusting relationships with staff. This included:

- **Encouraging Sarah to write her feelings down as a coping strategy. Sarah has the option to also share this with staff and her social worker**
- **Engaging in a pamper night with staff each week**
- **Using a foot spa to help her to feel more relaxed**
- **Attending the gym and fitness classes to support physical and mental health**
- **Going for a long country walk at least once per week. As well as promoting a healthy lifestyle for Sarah, this gives her time to herself, away from her peers**
- **A plan to improve Sarah's sleeping, which had been impacting her wellbeing. This included turning the television off before bedtime, reading books and spraying her pillow with lavender to create a soothing and calm atmosphere**

Achieving positive outcomes

We are very proud of the progress Sarah has made since she arrived at Waterside.

There has been a significant improvement in her attendance at school and the management of her emotions. This has been achieved by developing coping strategies and building positive relationships with the staff team at Waterside. Sarah completed her schooling at Radio City School, part of Aspris Children's Services, before successfully gaining a place at the local college.

Although Sarah still struggles with her emotions, she is able to self-regulate and will utilise her coping strategies. After Sarah's first difficult month at Waterside, her physically aggressive behaviour has stopped completely.

As well as developing good relationships with the staff team at Waterside, Sarah continues to see her social worker regularly and maintains contact with her mum.

With our support, Sarah is progressing and developing and is looking forward to a more positive future. She is currently undertaking an independent living and cooking programme. Staff are also supporting Sarah with the transition to semi-independent living in her local area.

Get in touch

For more information on our specialist education or residential care services, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Call: 0330 056 4467

Email: placements@aspris.com

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*Names and images in this brochure have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

