

# East Dunbartonshire Council: Community Support Team Support Service

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Glasgow  
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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 12 March 2018

**Service provided by:**  
East Dunbartonshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003380

**Care service number:**  
CS2012308199

## About the service

East Dunbartonshire Council: Community Support Team provide a support service (care at home) to children and their families who are normally resident within East Dunbartonshire Council area. The service operates from East Dunbartonshire's Social work Headquarters in Kirkintilloch.

The service has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since January 2013.

Stated aims of the service include:

- To provide a support service which improves the outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families within the principles of 'Getting it Right for Every Child' and to help them meet their potential in a safe, healthy environment.
- To work with families and other professionals to make positive change, using early intervention to make a significant difference in helping children and young people achieve better outcomes and reach their full potential.

The service operates with a team manager, a home care organiser and a team of front line staff made up of social work assistants and family support workers. At the time of inspection, the service was providing care to 118 children and young people and their families. The community support team offers flexible support seven days per week from 08:00 to 21:00.

## What people told us

During the inspection, we were able to speak with a number of parents and carers about support they had received from the service. It could be difficult to contact families by telephone but we gathered a range of views which helped inform our inspection.

Comments included:

"Staff are fab. My daughter has a member of staff allocated to her so sees the same person every week. This helps build good relationship with the staff member".

"They are giving the right amounts of support and I doesn't have any concerns".

"The staff helped support contact with my child - gave financial support to attend and for activities, and helped me by giving me prompts to think about tidying up the room and get prepared for leaving. This made things easier for me and my child. Things have gone really well and now I don't need the staff as much any more".

"Once they asked me if a trainee could observe, I was more than happy to allow this as I feel I have a good relationship with all the staff I have contact with".

"The staff are very personable and appear to care".

"I don't think I need the help, but my social worker won't listen and insists that she keeps the support in place".

"It gives me a wee break and lets me get on with things like going to get the shopping".

"When my child was younger, he didn't like strangers but he has gotten to know all the staff now and looks forward to his outings with them. He'll say "the girls are coming to take me out tomorrow, eh mum?".

"The carers do things that my child can enjoy that also mean a lot to them too. My child loves going with carers to visit a horse and feed it carrots".

"The support I receive is like a mini respite. It means I can do things like support homework with the other children or get dinner organised. I am very grateful to have this service".

"My child is always happy to go with the carers and when there are new members of staff, they are always teamed up with more experienced staff".

We were told by a parent that the timing of monitoring visits carried out by the team could have a negative impact on routines and behaviour of children in the house. The parent did tell us that they had spoken to staff who had been able to make some changes to visiting times. We are aware that some of the support provided by the service involves observing and supporting families at different times to establish routines for children at meals and bedtime.

One of the parents we spoke to suggested that the service consider how it might promote peer support for individuals, perhaps through a support group or group activities. The parent felt that this could reduce social isolation and promote wellbeing of the family as a whole.

## Self assessment

We did not ask the manager to submit a self-assessment this year. Instead we looked at the service development plan for evidence of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	6 - Excellent

## What the service does well

At this inspection, we found the service to be operating at a very good level within the theme of care and support, and at an excellent level within the management and leadership theme.

Working agreements were evident within all files we sampled. Robust care planning was evident within support plans and 'my world triangle' assessments. Delivery of support was planned well, with staff rotas created in a timely manner. The service was actively reducing numbers of staff visiting individual families to try and promote consistency and we could see that care was taken to match less familiar staff with colleagues who more well known to specific families.

The service effectively considered the skills of staff in matching the specific needs of individuals. We received praise from a wide range of external professionals about the value and flexibility of the service, with particular regard to the role of the home care organiser and the planning involved in managing referrals and allocating appropriate supports. It was pleasing to hear that the service was referred to as 'efficiently responsive in times of crisis' and 'a backbone of support enabling many vulnerable children to remain in the home setting' by professionals who had referred families to the service.

The service used an excellent process for managing change. Collaborative planning and trialling of a variety of 'projects' meant that staff felt included, consulted and influential in the development of change. Examples of change included:

- the creation of a highly effective file auditing system undertaken by a core group of staff (representing all roles within the team) in collaboration with the lead child protection officer for East Dunbartonshire Council
- development of recording documentation used within the service
- development of service user feedback and consultation systems.

A very good model of participation had been developed by the service. The service had focused on creating a feedback loop to ensure that participants were kept informed regarding the use of feedback, with transparency about outcomes and any resulting service developments. An effective consultation newsletter supported this. We felt this model was collaborative and encouraged learning, showing positive regard for the views and experiences of individuals who use the service.

The team were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their role and the support they provided. Many of the staff had been in post for a significant period of time. It was pleasing to hear from staff that current team dynamics and strong, supportive leadership from managers and senior staff was a key factor in the low rate of staff turnover.

The service demonstrated effective multi-agency working with other East Dunbartonshire Council services and external agencies as well as representation within a range of working groups and forums promoting positive outcomes for vulnerable families. We heard from a range of professionals about the valuable role of the service in reducing the risk of harm for children and young people. The service benefited greatly from sharing an office base with social work colleagues and the external manager. It was pleasing to hear how the service utilised the close proximity of professional peers to enhance their understanding of the needs of individuals and families and promote positive outcomes through targeted support.

The superb leadership attributes of the management team, in terms of delivering very strong added value to the project through the highest standards of collaborative working, quality assurance and staff engagement and change management, were exemplary.

## What the service could do better

The service should continue to build on and develop existing strengths.

We discussed with the service, enhancements that could be made in strengthening links between staff supervision and appraisal, training plans and the service development plan. The service also planned to incorporate their cycle of participation and service user consultation findings into the service development plan.

Further development of the appraisal process was also planned. We look forward to seeing how these systems progress at next inspection.

The service should continue to minimise numbers of staff supporting families where possible to improve consistency and promote relationship building.

It would be beneficial for the service provider to consider how they might facilitate access to electronic recording systems for the purpose of inspection. Paper copies of documentation were made available upon request, however this presented difficulties in identifying (from printed documents) whether review timescales had been met, who had written specific records or reports and whether contents of documents had been agreed or discussed with relevant individuals.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## 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).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings								
28 Mar 2017	Unannounced	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	Not assessed
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28 Jan 2016	Announced (short notice)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>Not assessed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	Not assessed	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
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23 Dec 2014	Unannounced	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good						
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Date	Type	Gradings	
		Environment Staffing Management and leadership	Not assessed 4 - Good 5 - Very good
21 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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